

Addendum

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# A Way in the Wilderness

by

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## Preface

As the 21<sup>st</sup> Century dawns, questions that have been debated by both scholar and layperson alike for more than half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century concerning the Dead Sea Scrolls are still considered unanswerable by and large.

It is not my purpose in writing this book to denigrate or in any way upstage the thousands of scholarly men and women who have devoted so much time and effort to the study of the scrolls. I make no claim to expertise in such a class as the fine professionals who have been involved with the scrolls over the last half-century. However, I too have devoted much time and effort to research in this area and were I to withhold my contribution from this discussion I sincerely believe that it would serve no constructive purpose for anyone.

Though the majority of the most controversial ideas that follow are solely my own opinion or interpretation, I will eliminate the repetitious use of “I believe” or “I think”, etc., and simply state my views without qualification.

### A Way in the Wilderness

By Harry C. Marschner

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## Introduction

The group associated with the scrolls found in the caves near Qumran along the Dead Sea were able to pinpoint the time of their beginning as 197 B.C.E. It is not surprising that a group of **pious Jews would feel compelled to unite** in the cause of preserving true Judaism in 197 B.C.E..

The nation of Israel had just undergone a traumatic change as their Egyptian rulers, the Ptolemaic dynasty, had lost control of Israel to the Syrian Seleucid dynasty. Where the Ptolemys had allowed Israel great freedom and had even contributed to the support of the temple in Jerusalem, the Seleucids were much more concerned with assimilating the Jews into their Hellenistic world.

This pressure to accept Greek ideas and customs was intensified upon the sudden and suspicious death of Israel's beloved High Priest Simon the Just in 197 B.C.E.. By all accounts a highly respected leader both at home and abroad.

Simon's death can be seen as the catalyst for the men who became the "Way", the name the sect gave themselves, to question the future of their nation and their faith. Their description, found in their writings, of being made to feel guilty and lost like blind men eloquently portrays a people whose leader has been taken from them so suddenly.

Simon had ruled for nearly 25 years and had guided Israel through a very difficult time, and now when his leadership was needed more than ever he was gone. Gradually the nation drifted towards hellenization. Simon's eldest son" Onias III, assumed the High Priesthood in 188 B.C.E. and attempted to rally support against the Greek

ways but, though well-regarded, he **simply was not the caliber** of leader that his father had been. The type of strong leader that was required.

The “Way” write that 20 years passed between the time when they felt called to join together and the emergence of the leader that they had prayed for. Being fiercely loyal to the Zadokite dynasty, from which the revered Simon had descended, it follows that the “Way” would embrace another Zadokite, another son of Simon, named Jesus Ben Sira. Though the word “Sira” is not considered translatable from its original Hebrew, it is likely meant to refer to Simon the Just in a more specific fashion than the use of the name Simon would. Like the “Way” Jesus had also witnessed the magnificence of his father Simon and had also experienced the pain and grief from his sudden loss. Jesus also felt abandoned for a time and he traveled outside Israel in search of his place in a world that could change so quickly.

Jesus, as the High Priest’s son, was given the finest education available. In addition, he read, studied and meditated upon the Jewish scriptures independently and upon his return from educating himself in the ways of the world, he published a book.

He believed that his book would provide guidance and the kind of leadership that his people needed in this troubling time. According to the introduction of the Greek translation of his book, written by his grandson, Jesus hoped that his book would in fact help anyone, Jew or Gentile, that was desirous of understanding Judaism and how to live according to the will of God. This hope no doubt stemmed from Jesus’ faith in the prophecies of the biblical prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah, whose influence is so apparent in his book, that one day the whole world would accept the wisdom of Judaism.

When the “Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira” appeared in Jerusalem in 177 B.C.E. Jesus was taking a bold and potentially dangerous step towards claiming his father’s legacy. Israel was in a state of flux with lines sharply dividing several religious factions. The book was clearly meant to compete with the no doubt abundant works of Greek authors of philosophy which would have been circulating in Israel at that time and so adopts a very urbane and contemporary style. A central theme in the book is the wisdom of compromise and dialogue as a way to avoid conflict and violence. The book uses images drawn from the daily lives of the people of the time, some very hellenistic and others no doubt reflecting the very pious communities, to examine the question of just what is and what isn’t important in the practice of Judaism. This question then requires the author to express his beliefs as regard to the true nature of Judaism and God.

So the book was not only very personal for Jesus but for his audience as well. Since he was most concerned, as he wrote, with helping those who were lost, he had to use images that such people, hellenized Jews who had abandoned their faith and Gentiles, could relate to. But the book also offered hope and encouragement to those faithful Jews who might be doubting or **questioning their place** in the changing landscape of Israel. His book was no doubt intended to stimulate the minds and stir the hearts of his audience but by being so broad in his scope and so deep in his probe of the state of his nation and Judaism, Jesus ran the risk of offending nearly everyone who might read his work. According to the Jewish historian Josephus, however, he did manage to gain the support of a majority of the people. According to the scrolls, this majority included the “Way” who accepted Jesus as the rightful heir to Simon and their

spiritual head. In their scrolls he became the “Teacher of Righteousness”.

In 175 B.C.E. the new Seleucid king, Antiochus, began to fear that Onias III, still reigning as the High Priest of Israel, might attempt to stop the spread of hellenization by realigning Israel with the former, more tolerant rulers, the Ptolemys of Egypt whom the Seleucids had defeated to gain possession of Israel. In order to prevent this, Antiochus ordered Onias III assassinated. Upon his death, Jesus Ben Sira ascended to the office of High Priest. Jesus’ book was widely known and quite popular and the conciliatory nature of some of his writing as well as his acceptance of the Greek form of his name, Jason, made Antiochus optimistic that Jesus would be the type of Jewish leader that would serve his purpose and bring the hellenization of Israel to completion. However, as time went on it became apparent to Antiochus that Jesus Ben Sira’s universalist bent was not nearly broad enough to allow for the abandonment of Judaism, but in fact was dedicated to a widespread proliferation of the religion.

Antiochus realized that he must effect another change and stripped Jesus of his authority, installing Jesus’ younger brother, Menelaus, as the High Priest after receiving Menelaus’ assurances that he would advance the program of hellenization that Antiochus desired. Menelaus became the “Wicked Priest” in the scrolls of the “Way”. This usurpation was opposed by Jesus and his supporters, mostly Hasidim, or pious Jews, which included the “Way” and battles were fought with the Hellenizers as recorded in the scrolls; but the issue was settled by the superior military support Menelaus received from Antiochus and Jesus was forced into exile.

Some of the scrolls found in the caves around Qumran have been posited to be from the temple in Jerusalem. These scrolls, dating from the second century B.C.E. and earlier,

were no doubt deposited there by Jesus before he fled south to Egypt and exile where he died shortly after arriving in 171 B.C.E..

The second book of Maccabees tells a story of these events that is deliberately false. The writers of second Maccabees were loyal Hasmoneans and writing at a time when a significant faction existed in Judea who were **loyal to the Zadokites** who had been replaced by the Hasmoneans. In particular, the “Way” leave no doubt in their writings that they were strongly loyal to the Zadokites. The author of second Maccabees depicts Jesus as an evil violent man because, as Josephus notes, the majority of the Jews supported Jesus during his battle against Menelaus. At the time of the writing of second Maccabees the Zadokites were waiting in the wings in Egypt for any sign of a chance to return to Israel and reclaim the High Priesthood. The book of second Maccabees was written, in part, to discourage any thought of this by steering public opinion against the Zadokites and especially Jesus Ben Sira, also called Jason, and his descendants who we know from the introduction to the Greek version of the “Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira” were living in Egypt. One thing agreed to by second Maccabees, Josephus and the scrolls of the “Way” is the special mention of a particularly vile character who defiled the temple and led the nation of Israel into the ruinous forced hellenization that caused so much suffering and destruction. That man is identified in two of the sources by name as Menelaus, who then must be accepted as the “Wicked Priest” of the third. How heartbreaking for the “Way” to have to acknowledge that a true Zadokite fell into such a despicable state of moral corruption.

The period of forced hellenization which saw all Jewish scriptures, religious practices and customs become illegal

under the rule of the Seleucids is written of by the “Way” as the beginning of a time of great tribulation and violence in Israel. They delineate the period as lasting from the death of the “Teacher of Righteousness”, that is Jesus Ben Sira/ Jason’s death in exile in Egypt in about 171 B.C.E., to the death of the last of the men of war, that is the death of Simon Maccabees in the year 134 B.C.E.. This was a period of 38 years or about 40 years as the scrolls characterize it.

During this time unspeakable atrocities were committed against Jews and the laws against Judaism, which included a penalty of crucifixion for the crime of simply possessing Jewish scriptures (Prefiguring the Roman ban of Jewish writings in the first century C.E.) or having a newborn circumcised, drove many of the people of Israel to rebel in a bloody and destructive war. The “Way”, as evidenced by the scrolls, did participate in the revolt. It could be seen as an extension of the fighting that they had done in support of Jesus and they of course had faith that victory would re-establish the Zadokite dynasty in the High Priesthood.

The leaders of the revolt however were the Maccabees also known as the Hasmoneans. Upon the success of the revolt they assumed the High Priesthood. The “Way” became distraught by what they saw as the betrayal of their trust by the Maccabees.

The men of war written of in the scrolls were the Maccabees brothers, the last of whom was Simon who died in 134 B.C.E..

One group of pious Jews who were noticeably absent during the struggle between Jesus and Menelaus was the Pharisees. The “Way” describes them as standing by and doing nothing while the “Teacher of Righteousness” was undergoing his trials. An **older sect**, the **Pharisees** saw Jesus Ben Sira, with **his very modern book**, celebrity,

willingness to appeal to the more hellenized Jews and the Gentiles and acceptance of a Greek name, as not the solution, but part of the problem for Israel. Though they could not oppose him and thereby help the cause of the even less acceptable Menelaus, they chose to remain neutral.

The philosophy of the “Way” was based in Jesus Ben Sira’s mission to save those who were lost. Primarily, they were reaching out to the fallen away Jews and the Gentiles. Jesus’ book contains many references to things that such people could identify with, but the final word is always that the ultimate joy is found in the fear of the Lord and in Wisdom. The Pharisees, certainly not lost, at least in their own minds, could not relate to these images and saw not hope in Jesus’ book, but danger.

The popularity of the “Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira” remained strong into the beginning of the first century B.C.E.. This continued acceptance of Jesus Ben Sira in Israel’s synagogues gave the “Way” hope that some day the Zadokites would be returned to the High Priesthood.

The Pharisees, like the “Way”, were instrumental in rallying support for the Maccabees as they led Israel’s fight for freedom from Seleucid rule. John Hyrcanus, Hasmonean ruler of Israel in the last decades of the second century B.C.E., and a son of one of the men of war, was himself a member of the Pharisee sect until his dissatisfaction with their criticism of his policies led him to leave the Pharisees and join the **Sadducee** sect. The Pharisees had gained a large following among the common folk of Israel by this time and they attempted to use their influence to make demands on first, John Hyrcanus, and then his successor, Alexander Janneus. John Hyrcanus may have sent them a message by resigning from their group, but his successor, Alexander Janneus, responded to what had become treasonous opposition to

his rule by crucifying 800 Pharisees in a gruesome mass execution in his palace gardens.

This disturbing event occurred in the year 78 B.C.E., and it became a defining moment not only for the Pharisees but for the “Way” as well. On his deathbed, in 76 B.C.E., Alexander Janneus, realizing the backlash of opinion and sympathy for the Pharisees which his brutal act had engendered, and recognizing the continued strengthening of the Pharisees’ power base among the people, advised his successor, his wife, Alexandra Salome, to make peace with the Pharisees by publicly declaring her regret at her husband’s brutality and offering a sort of partnership to the Pharisees in the ruling of Israel.

Salome acted on Alexander’s advice and upon ascending to power she made the Pharisee leadership virtual co-rulers of Israel.

It was during the reign of Salome that Jesus/Jason’s book the “Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira” was officially banned from use in the synagogues of Israel on the grounds that it was too influenced by Greek ideas, written as it was during the **Seleucid period of hellenization**. It was also during her reign that the second book of Maccabees was written in which the last Zadokite priests were villified as the enemies of Israel and the Hasmonean/Maccabees brothers glorified as the saviors of Israel. This double blow to the hopes of Zadokite loyalists was engineered principally by the Pharisee leaders and helped to solidify their position as the most influential sect of Judaism as the gospel era began in the first century C.E.



The first part of this book will examine the gospel of Mark and how it relates to Jesus Ben Sira, the “Way”, and the Dead Sea Scrolls. It will be followed by a similar examination of the gospel of John and conclude with some thoughts on subsequent events pertaining to Christianity and Judaism.

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# Part One

## The Gospel of Mark

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## Introduction

Several points should be kept in mind when reading the gospel of Mark.

First of all, the influence of Isaiah's writings on the "Way", Jesus Ben Sira and "Mark". Isaiah had **prophesied that when the messiah** came all the peoples of the earth would embrace Judaism. The "Way" reflected this belief when they wrote about the final battle that would one day be won by the children of light over the children of darkness.

This battle is waged in the spiritual realm between those who accept God's Wisdom and those who reject the Light, as well as within each individual who must choose the light or darkness within themselves.

Jesus Ben Sira, the "Teacher of Righteous", also addresses this subject in his book. There he teaches that all human beings, regardless of their race or nationality are able to accept Wisdom and live like a child of God.

According to Jesus' grandson, who helped to translate the "Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira" into Greek from its original language of Hebrew, one aim that Jesus had in writing his book was to provide non-Jewish peoples that might be open to the teachings of Judaism with a starting point to understanding the religion and its scriptures.

So too, the gospel of Mark tells us of Jesus' willingness to include Gentiles in his kingdom.

The second point to consider is the situation in Judea at the time of the writing of "Mark". At this time Judea was a place of violence and lawlessness. The best analogies to the chaos that reigned there would be for our time, the scenes

we have witnessed in places like Somalia, the Balkans or Vietnam. Violent rebel/bandits roamed the country from end to end wreaking havoc and destruction. Assassins were everywhere and murder and death were commonplace.

The nominal peace-keeping force, the Roman occupiers, were as violent, brutal and dishonest as the lawless, if not more so. We are told by the historian Josephus, an eyewitness to the conditions, that the Roman ruler in Judea, Florus, drove the Jews to rebellion, in part, to destroy the evidence of his own dishonesty which he feared the Jews would reveal to his superiors in Rome.

This nightmarish environment was of course not unlike the turmoil that enveloped Israel during the forty years between 174B.C.E. and 134B.C.E. which the “Way” wrote of in the scrolls.

The “Way” was said to be dedicated to peace and presumably joined the Maccabean revolt against the Seleucids only when they believed the cause was just and necessary. Again, the “Way” was being driven to a decision during the Roman period as to how they would respond to the same sort of upheaval.

The third point is the attitude towards Jesus Ben Sira and the “Way” at this time. By the time Pontius Pilate’s reign in Judea had begun, the “Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira” had been excluded from the synagogues for over one hundred years. Though readily available and presumably included in many scriptural collections of the period, he was never read or talked about. “Wisdom” was officially suspect, an historical curiosity and ignored by most Jews.

A similar situation exists in the Roman Catholic Church of today. Though the “Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira” was given full canonical status by the Church in the nineteenth

century, it is considered an odd book from a shadowy time and seldom taught from or referred to

The “Way” too had been pushed into the background by this time through the influence of the Pharisees who were still a major part of the ruling coalition in Israel.

The final point, which I will be demonstrating in the pages that follow, is the evidence that the gospel of Mark was truly written by a member or members of the “Way” and is actually a reworking of the “Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira” interwoven with historical notes about the “Way” and messages intended to provide guidance to the membership as they tried to cope under very difficult circumstances.

In order to reveal the true origin and meaning of the gospel of Mark, I will take both books from the beginning and show the corresponding verse in the “Wisdom of Ben Sira” that the writer of “Mark” was using. The proof of the gospel’s dependence on “Wisdom” derives as much from the order of the subjects “Mark” addresses as from the actual events and lessons. Therefore, it is important to follow the exact sequence of the verses as written in both books.

Of course, in order to truly prove the relationship between the two books for oneself, it will be necessary to have a copy of each book to compare. To assist those who wish to refer to the two books I will include the chapter and verse number of each comparison from each book. But in order to make this book as complete as possible in itself I will also include as much material as is practical from the two books along with comments.

### The Gospel of Mark Chapter One verses 1-3

“Mark” begins with the history of the “Way” and their spiritual father, Isaiah, who was the beginning of the story

of Jesus Christ. The quote combines verses from the books of Malachi and Isaiah and acts as the calling card of the sect. The verse from Isaiah was the source of the **name by which the “Way” called themselves**.

Since the quotes are combined and not quoted exactly, the reader is to understand that what follows is to be interpreted symbolically and not to be taken literally.

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\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\*

Chapter One, verses 1-20

“Wisdom” begins with teaching on Wisdom. The origin of Wisdom is God where Wisdom resides eternally. God alone bestows His Light, a symbol of Wisdom, where He wills. To fear the Lord is to acknowledge His supremacy and to wonder at His power and perfection. To fear the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Wisdom provides knowledge and counsel to guide one through the wilderness of a sinful world. To receive God’s wisdom is the greatest blessing and the highest goal for mankind to pursue.

The Gospel of Mark Chapter One verses 4-8

John the Baptist is introduced. His ministry is an outreach to the masses that recalls the figure who so influenced the original founders of the “Way”, Simon the Just. Just prior to the Seleucid period of tribulations the Jews had been given respect, united as they were under the well-regarded Simon. **John the Baptist is also a man of great character and charisma.** The power of an individual, like John or Simon or Jesus can affect people and change history.

The “Way”’s response to the situation that has developed in Judea is to send men like John to reach out to the people and convince them to seek Wisdom, God’s Light, which the “Way” believed was found in Jesus Ben Sira.

In addition, since the Pharisees were controlling the Jewish religious establishment, the “Way” had little choice but to turn to the crowds just as the Pharisees had done in the past when the “Way” had enjoyed greater status.

That John speaks of the one who would follow him refers to Jesus Ben Sira as a conduit for Wisdom. Wisdom,

as well as Jesus Ben Sira came before John and would follow him also. The reference to the baptism of the spirit bestowed by the one who would follow John refers to the teaching of the “Way” that the Holy Spirit fills those who accept Wisdom, found in Jesus.

### The Gospel of Mark Chapter One verses 9-11

The history of the “Way” continues with Jesus’ coming to John and being baptized. Making Jesus a contemporary of John recalls that Jesus Ben Sira was a child during the reign of Simon the Just. Not only was Jesus inspired spiritually by Simon as Jesus relates in his book, but he very well may have been baptized by Simon as part of his initiation into Judaism.

By calling Jesus God’s Son the “Way” is showing their acceptance of Jesus Ben Sira’s words. In his book he refers to God as his Father in the tradition of King David. This is also a reference to Wisdom which is taught as God’s Firstborn in the Old Testament.

The reference to Galilee would be seen as a message to the membership concerning the revolt. We know that the area was a hotbed of rebel activity during the period leading up to the war. If “Mark” was written just prior to the beginning of the revolt it could be that “Way” members were being told to go to Galilee to try to stop the fighting or to join the fighting. We do know, from Josephus, that Essenes did fight in the war, Essene being another name for the “Way”. As they realized the failure of their efforts to promote peace, the “Way” could have felt it their duty to join this revolt as it appears that they joined the revolt against the Seleucids under similar circumstances.

The Gospel of Mark Chapter One verses 12-15

Jesus is driven into the wilderness and tempted by Satan following his baptism. This continues the historical retracing, as like the members of the “Way”, following Simon’s murder, Jesus Ben Sira also was lost and confused. He even left Israel for a while and traveled in search of his place in the world.

After overcoming Satan’s temptations, Jesus goes out and spreads John’s message of repentance. This symbolizes the influence of Simon on Jesus Ben Sira and his book, which was rooted in Simon’s high priesthood. Upon his return to Israel Jesus published “Wisdom” in which he publicly explained his faith and called on the Jewish people to seek Wisdom for help in that troubled time.

\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\* Chapter One, verses 22-27

Jesus Ben Sira’s teaching turns to anger and the importance of controlling one’s tongue. Through discipline one learns to **obey God’s commandments and accept Wisdom**. This lesson on waiting for the right time to speak out was very timely for the Jewish people who were then under Seleucid rule. The time of which “Mark” writes mirrored the Seleucid era and the “Way” believed that Jesus’ teachings needed to be brought back and popularized through John the Baptist’s ministry and the “Way”. For the “Way”, the discontinuation of the Zadokite dynasty had marked the beginning of Israel’s current troubles.

The Gospel of Mark **Chapter One** verses 16-20

Jesus meets the fishermen who would become his followers. The “Way” referred to themselves as fishers for men in their writings. The phrase is taken from the biblical book of the prophet Habbakuk. It symbolizes the focus of the “Way”, which was on the battle to bring mankind to the Light of Wisdom. They taught that this was the way to bring peace to Israel, not the fighting of the men of war which is never more than a temporary solution.

After the publication of his book, the “Way”, as symbolized by the fishermen in “Mark”, chose Jesus Ben Sira as their leader. He became the “Teacher of Righteousness” in their writings. Jesus’ lessons on the obligation to reach out to the lost and guide them to the Light are echoed throughout the Dead Sea Scrolls. The “Way” believed that this was the essence of Judaism, a starting point for them to build on in their mission to bring peace to their nation and the world. Through Jesus Ben Sira’s teachings that all people were potential children of Light, as derived from Isaiah’s writings on the future worldwide acceptance of Judaism, the “Way” could set a goal of reaching everyone; which meant the Greeks of the Seleucid period as well as the Romans of “Mark” were fair game for their nets.

The Gospel of Mark **Chapter One** verses 21-28

The history of the “Way” continues as “Mark” recounts the acceptance that Jesus Ben Sira’s book received during and just after the Seleucid era. At that time “Wisdom” was read and studied in synagogues throughout Israel. In the gospel Jesus enters a synagogue and begins teaching. The

people are amazed by his knowledge and his fame is spread throughout the area.

The man with the unclean spirit who berates Jesus is an illustration of the next lesson in “Wisdom”.

\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\*

Chapter One, v.28-30 Chapter Two, v.1-17

This lesson is on the shame that will befall the one who approaches God without the proper respect in his heart. His deceitful spirit will be revealed and God will betray him before the congregation. The disciplining of the tongue is an important sign of respect for and fear of the Lord. The lesson continues on the proper attitude of someone who is faithful towards God.

If “Mark” has directed the members of the “Way” to go to Galilee in response to the rebellious activity there, then the lesson here is especially appropriate. Jesus Ben Sira continues that testing trials confront the one who would serve God. During such testing one must be brave and fear only the Lord. If one humbles themselves like a child, God their Father will be merciful and protect them. Those who serve God can be certain of their reward. He ends by asserting that it is much better to fall into the Lord’s hands rather than the hands of men.

The Gospel of Mark Chapter One verses 29-45

Jesus goes to a disciple’s home and cures the disciple’s ill mother-in-law.

Jesus has gained a large following among the people

now. He is teaching in the synagogues and casting out demons. A leper that Jesus heals is told to be quiet about his miracle, **but the leper tells everyone** about what has **happened and Jesus** must go out to an isolated area to escape the crowds who want his help. Still, many people continue to come to him.

\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\* Chapter Three, verses 1-20

The verses here are concerned with the correct attitude one should have towards one's parents. This lesson is the source of - the story about the disciple Simon's mother-in-law in "Mark". Perhaps "Mark" is stretching the point a little to emphasize the spirit that is required. The importance of humility is taught as the key to this deferential attitude towards one's father and mother. The harmony that Jesus teaches will result when the principles are practiced is shown in "Mark" as Jesus symbolically lifts up Simon's mother-in-law who in turn humbly attends the men like a servant.

Jesus/Jason's popularity during the Seleucid era is attested to by Josephus. In the scrolls the "Teacher of Righteousness" is said to have owned a retreat to which he fled to escape the wrath of the "Wicked Priest". The complex at Qumran would be that retreat, or second home owned by Jesus Ben Sira.

The Gospel of Mark Chapter Two verses 1-12

Jesus' fame has now attracted the attention of the scribes and they are offended by his ministry. They cannot accept his apparent belief that he is God's servant and empowered to forgive sins. But Jesus counters that we are all empowered

and obligated to forgive each other's sins in order to obtain God's **forgiveness for our own** sins. However, their hearts **are closed towards** Jesus due to their lack of faith and their stubborn adherence to their own beliefs and customs.

\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\*

Chapter Three, verses 21-31 Chapter Four, verses 1-31

This lesson begins with an admonishment against mental stubbornness. Rather than having a closed mind, the faithful will be humble and open their minds to the instruction of Wisdom which is ongoing and ever progressing. Through Wisdom they will be able to accept the help that is offered to them and in turn be able to minister to those in need themselves. By serving each other they will be serving God and become like children of God. Through service they will learn humility and they will not be ashamed to confess their sins and seek forgiveness. They will speak the truth and fight for the truth, and God in turn will fight for them.

The Gospel of Mark Chapter Two verses 13-28

Jesus ministers to the wealthy tax collectors. These men are sinners who have gained their riches dishonestly. Like the sick in body, they are sick in spirit and Jesus attempts to heal their spiritual ills like a physician would attend to a physically ill person.

**The scribes, now joined by the Pharisees, are again offended** by Jesus' actions. Jesus debates with the Pharisees about their reliance on manmade traditions which is akin to the wealthy tax collectors' reliance on their hoarded riches. He emphasizes the superiority of learning and growing

through Wisdom over clinging to customs. Jesus' source of knowledge and his love of the scriptures is shown by his reference to King David.

\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\*

Chapter Five, verses 1-15

This lesson is on wealth. Wealth, especially dishonestly acquired wealth, is no source of security. God punishes sinners in His own time, and material prosperity will not protect them from their day of judgement.

Learning to speak the truth is the faithful's obligation. At the appropriate time, they must be able to defend their beliefs. They must discipline their speech so that they can avoid the pitfalls of emotional outbursts, falsehoods and fruitless arguments.

The Gospel of Mark Chapter Three verses 1-35

The Pharisees were introduced for the first time in the preceding chapter. Alerted now to Jesus' popularity, they are depicted as true enemies of Jesus and are seeking to destroy him.

In contrast to his enemies, Jesus now chooses those who will be his friends. Symbolically, the twelve apostles represent the nation of Israel which has been chosen to receive Wisdom, represented by Jesus, who will be their salvation and through them the salvation of all mankind.

The Pharisees are seen as the enemies of Israel who only divide the nation and push it towards annihilation. The true family of God is made up of the faithful who serve Him, and can include all peoples.



\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\* Chapter 6, verse 1-17

This lesson is on friends and enemies. The enemies of the faithful are liars who ignite passions and bring shame and destruction to their people. Friends are difficult to find and the faithful must be careful not to trust anyone without first testing them. Those who fear the Lord will find true friends.

The opposition of the Pharisees to Jesus in “Mark” relates to the conflict that arose between the “Way” and the Pharisees following the Seleucid era when the “Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira” was widely used for instruction in the synagogues.

The Gospel of Mark Chapter Four verses 1-41

The parable of the sower and the seed. The seed of the Word, another term for Wisdom, will take root and grow in those who have prepared themselves through discipline to accept Wisdom and be fruitful. Wisdom is not easy to understand or accept. But when it takes root in the faithful it will **grow and flourish like the tiny mustard seed** that becomes a great tree. The need for personal instruction is shown by Jesus’ private sessions with the disciples.

Jesus’ role as the teacher that Israel needs is illustrated by the boat in the storm. The disciples, representing Israel, are despairing while Jesus lies sleeping in the boat. When Jesus is awakened he calms the storm and brings peace. He asks the disciples to have faith.

\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\*

Chapter Six, verses 18-22

Jesus teaches that Wisdom is like one who plows and sows. Through discipline the faithful will reap her harvest. The undisciplined will find Wisdom too difficult and they will discard it like a heavy stone, losing its blessings.

In the first century boats used stones as anchors. Like the foolish who discard the stone of Wisdom because of its difficulty, or weight; in “Mark”, Israel has discarded the “Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira” which is their anchor. The awakening of Jesus represents the belief of the “Way” that Jesus Ben Sira’s teachings have the power to rescue Israel and bring peace if the nation will put its faith in him.

The Gospel of Mark Chapter Five verses 1-20

Jesus crosses the sea which is symbolic of the path which the Greek and Roman invaders have taken to Israel. The invaders are like a man with an unclean spirit who is wild and unable to be restrained or to restrain himself. Even chains and shackles cannot control him. The explicit reference to the spirit’s name as Legion, identifies the invaders’ **obsession** with war.

The man recognizes Jesus, or Wisdom, but is sure that Jesus is trying to destroy him. Jesus heals the man and then instructs him to return to his own land, the Greek Decapolis, and teach his people about God’s mercy. The way to peace is not through war but by ministering to the invaders’ spiritual ills. They must be led to the Light of God and shown the blessings that come from the acceptance of Wisdom.

\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\*

Chapter Six, verses 23-31

Jesus teaches that Wisdom is hard to accept at first. It is like being fettered and collared. But the faithful persevere and the fetters they wear become at last like a glorious robe which is a joy and an honor to display.

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The Gospel of Mark

Chapter Five, verse 21-43

Chapter Six, verse 1-6

Jesus is shown ministering to the faithful. The emphasis is on the healing power of Wisdom. The importance of discipline is again taught by Jesus' warning that the witnesses of the miracle should not tell what they have seen.

Those without faith are contrasted with the faithful. Jesus identifies with the prophets of old who were rejected by Israel time and again.

The use of the word carpenter is a reference to an idol maker. In the old Testament a carpenter symbolized one who made idols because the images were often carved from wood. Jesus Ben Sira was criticized by some as trying to make an idol of himself by calling himself God's Son and proclaiming himself a channel for Wisdom.

\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\* Chapter Six, verses 32-37

In "Wisdom" Jesus advises the faithful to attach themselves to the wise amongst them as the woman following Jesus in the gospel has done. The central requirement of faith in God is also stressed as in "Mark".

Historically, the leader of the synagogue's faith in Jesus in "Mark" symbolizes the acceptance Jesus Ben Sira had once known.

The Gospel of Mark Chapter Six verses 7-29

The disciples are sent out by Jesus to minister to the faithful and given instructions on how to conduct themselves.

The disciples are then said to have preached repentance for sins and to have cast out demons and healed the sick.

The story of King Herod's sins and his execution of **John the Baptist** follows.

\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\* Chapter Seven, verses 1-36  
Chapter Eight, verses 1-19 Chapter Nine, verses 1-13

Jesus Ben Sira gives instruction to the faithful on how they should conduct themselves in the world. Jesus' example in "Mark". when he ministers to the synagogue leader and his daughter and the sick woman who followed Jesus is reflected in the instructions found here; including verses on visiting the sick, and the proper attitude towards dead and those who are in mourning.

Jesus admonishes the faithful not to contend with powerful people. He warns not to fan the flames of a sinner's fire lest the flames envelope you also or the powerful person use his position to punish or kill you.

In a direct correlation to King Herod's story, Jesus teaches about the dangers of becoming infatuated with the wrong woman. In particular, he cites virgins, prostitutes and another man's wife as potential pitfalls. A woman's beauty, he declares, has the power to lead a man to destruction.

The Gospel of Mark Chapter Six verses 30-56

In this section, the theme of reaching the gentile invaders spiritually is developed further. The story is about the multiplying of the loaves and fishes to feed the five thousand. The loaves, numbering five, symbolize the Pentateuch, the five books of Moses. The two fishes represent the books of the **Prophets and the Writings**. This was the three-part

division of the Hebrew scriptures which was commonly used in the first century.

Any number of people can be fed spiritually from as little as one book, but the number of five thousand is used to refer back to the Legion of the previous chapter. A legion was known to be comprised of five thousand soldiers, so again we find a symbol for the gentile invaders.

The miraculous feeding and Jesus' ascent to a mountain top call to mind Moses and his relationship with the people of Israel. Just as the Jews needed the instruction of Moses, so too the gentiles need Jesus to bring God's Word to them.

The disciples in the boat would again be the nation of Israel. They do not have faith in the power of the Word to change their militaristic oppressors. They are fighting against the "Way" as if against an adverse wind, or spirit. Jesus reassures them that he is not dead, or a ghost, but is alive in his book and that his spirit is with, not against them. If Israel will have faith in Jesus Ben Sira their nation can find peace and Judaism can bring Wisdom and healing to her neighbors as follows in the gospel.

\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\* Chapter Nine, verses 14-18  
Chapter Ten, verses 1-18

Jesus Ben Sira's next lessons are easily identified as the source of the material found in "Mark". Jesus begins with the advice that one should get to know one's neighbors and seek out the wise and intelligent among them and have dialogue with them. The topic of discussion should be the Lord and the joy of obeying His laws; which were of course revealed by Moses. **Those who are righteous** should be chosen by the faithful as dinner companions where this spiritual food should be shared.

In contrast to King Herod's story, recently recounted in "Mark", a people's leader should be wise, again like Moses. He should educate his nation and bring order and honor to them, for an unfit ruler will destroy his people.

A nation should not take pride in its material accomplishments, for only by God's grace can a nation prosper. Pride leads to anger which brings conflict and destruction. Human pride is a sin and God will punish the sinful nation as He sees fit, bringing unimaginable tragedies upon them. Pride and violence go hand in hand and are not the Lord's will for human beings.

#### The Gospel of Mark Chapter Seven verses 1-37

The Pharisees are attacking the behavior of some of the followers of Jesus. These disciples do not wash their hands before eating. They would be the gentiles that the "Way" is trying to enlighten. Jesus tells the Pharisees to consider their own shortcomings, of a spiritual nature, which **are far more deplorable**. Then Jesus teaches that the true measure of a person must not be their customs or appearance but their inner spirit; for it is in the heart that evil begins. Jesus demonstrates the Lord's spiritual judgement of all human beings by healing a gentile woman's child after the woman shows her faith. Then he goes to the Decapolis and heals a gentile who is deaf. These healings reflect the influence of Isaiah who wrote of the healing power of God's Light, symbolizing Wisdom, which would be brought to all men by the messiah.

\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\*

Chapter Ten, verses 19-31 Chapter Eleven, verses 1-28

Jesus Ben Sira writes that all human beings, no matter

their race, customs, social position or personal appearance are worthy of honor if they fear the Lord and humbly and faithfully obey God's laws. Those who forsake the Lord and break His commandments will be judged and suffer no matter who they are. From moment to moment God is able to change the fortunes of both individuals and their nations. God is omnipotent and will reward the faithful and punish the sinner in His own time and way.

The Gospel of Mark Chapter Eight verses 1-10

The miraculous feeding of a multitude with just a few loaves and fishes is repeated. The seven loaves would be the books we now call the apochryphal books which includes the writings of Jesus Ben Sira. In Judea in the first century it is believed that there were seven main apochryphal books. The number of **people fed here**, which is four thousand as opposed to the previous five thousand, represents the members of the "Way" which Josephus tells us numbered about four thousand.

Jesus has compassion for the four thousand because they have been following him for a long time. He wants to reward their faithfulness just as God rewards those who trust in Him. The apochryphal books, representing God's ongoing relationship with His faithful would be thought to contain more personal instruction for the "Way" just as Jesus has been instructing his closest disciples throughout the gospel.



\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\*  
Chapter Eleven, verses 1-28

In the Dead Sea Scrolls gatherings of the “Way” membership are described. This gathering of the four thousand people in the second story of miraculous feeding in “Mark” could represent such a meeting.

The verses from “Wisdom” encourage the faithful to persevere in their faith for the Lord will reward them. References to sitting on the ground as a symbol of humility, the concealed wisdom in God’s creation symbolized by the apocryphal or hidden books and God’s mercy towards those who remain faithful are included in the story in “Mark”.

The Gospel of Mark Chapter Eight verses 11-30

The Pharisees again argue with Jesus and demand a sign that will prove his relationship with God. Jesus tells them that they will receive no sign.

Jesus returns to the boat with his disciples symbolizing his relationship with Israel’s leaders. Their hearts **are closed and they do not understand** the significance of the miraculous feedings. The Pharisees and the Herodians are specifically given the blame for Israel’s problems. They refuse to accept their responsibility to provide their people with the spiritual nourishment they require.

Jesus heals a blind man as a symbol of Wisdom as an opening of the eyes. Jesus asks who people say he is and warns his followers not to make public that they believe he is the messiah. \*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\*

Chapter Eleven, verses 29-34 Chapter Twelve Chapter Thirteen, verses 1-24

Jesus Ben Sira speaks of enemies. He uses many examples of behavior that opposes the faithful. He warns the faithful to be careful not to fall prey to these sinners. In particular, the natural enmity between the rich and the poor is emphasized. The “Way” referred to themselves as the poor in the scrolls. Jesus decries the fact that a rich person’s words are accepted no matter how unwise, while a poor person may impart invaluable wisdom but people will ignore them and question who the person thinks he is.

The Gospel of Mark

Chapter Eight, verses 31-38

Chapter Nine, verse 1

Jesus tells his disciples that he will be rejected, suffer, die and be resurrected three days after his burial. The period of three days was taken from the story of Jonah. Jonah attempted to disobey God’s call to witness to the gentiles in Ninevah by sailing away. His ship was caught in a terrible **storm and the crewman threw Jonah overboard** as a sacrifice to **appease God** Whom Jonah confessed to having disobeyed. Jonah was then swallowed by a whale in whose belly he remained for three days before being spit out on the shore from where he proceeded to Ninevah and witnessed as God had commanded.

The “Way” have applied the lesson of the story of Jonah to Judea of the first century. They see the Jewish mission to bring God to mankind being neglected. “Mark” earlier placed the disciples, symbolizing Israel, on a ship with Jesus to make the association with Jonah even clearer. Like Jonah, Jesus is being sacrificed to atone with God, but in this case

not for his own sins but for the sins of his people. The “Way” wrote in the scrolls that they recognized and accepted such a sacrificial role for themselves.

Wisdom, which can be seen as God’s call to Israel as well, is then recognized in the persons of Jonah and Jesus Ben Sira, discarded by their people but preserved by God to be resurrected to fulfill God’s purpose for Israel as the teacher and saviour of mankind.

When Peter rebukes Jesus for his talk of suffering and death, Jesus teaches on human versus divine concerns. Jesus speaks of the coming kingdom of God and tells his disciples what is to be expected of them when they come to serve the **Lord and how they will be judged according** to their willingness to trust in God with their lives.

In verse 32 “Mark” makes a special point of saying that Jesus spoke openly here, perhaps to emphasize that “Mark” was being faithful to the lines from “Wisdom” that are the source of this part of the gospel. At first glance it may appear that “Mark” has contradicted Jesus Ben Sira’s lesson on living life completely and enjoying life by speaking of self-denial. Since this lesson in “Wisdom” is a subtle one, perhaps “Mark” felt compelled to bring out the essence of Jesus Ben Sira’s message rather than allow for misinterpretations to arise. Spiritually, the son of man must die and be reborn as the son of God.

**Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira** Chapter Thirteen, verses 15-26 Chapter Fourteen, verses 1-27

The verses here speak on the rejection of the poor, which symbolize the humble faithful, by the rich, which symbolize the proud sinners. The comparison is also made between the wolf, or sinner, who preys on the lamb, the faithful and a symbol of Jesus Christ in the gospels. Isaiah wrote of the

rejection of the suffering servant of God which was a central theme for the “Way” in the scrolls. Historically, Jesus Ben Sira was rejected, suffered, died and was being resurrected in spirit through his book by the “Way”.

Jesus’ rebuke of Peter illustrates the lesson here on those who speak foolishly and doubt God.

Jesus Ben Sira uses the allegory of a miser who begrudges even himself to describe the one who is not willing to give of himself and serve the Lord. Jesus writes that human beings die as surely as the tree that sheds its leaves. The life that we are given should be appreciated and enjoyed and the greatest joy comes from the pursuit of Wisdom and serving God, not from indulging in sinful pursuits. The subtle way that “Wisdom” teaches this lesson perhaps prompted “Mark” to be more direct in the gospel.

### The Gospel of Mark Chapter Nine verses 2-50

The transfiguring of Jesus before his closest disciples symbolizes the power of Wisdom which cleanses the soul and makes it white. This imagery is taken from the old testament. Jesus speaks with Elijah and Moses, symbolizing the tradition from which Jesus has come with the Lord’s Word for this generation.

Jesus is accepted by God as His Son just as Jesus Ben Sira has written of God as his Father and the “Way” saw themselves as the children of Light and not the children of man.

The three-part division of the scriptures is also represented as Jesus Ben Sira has joined Moses, of the Pentateuch, and Elijah of the books of the Prophets to symbolize the books known as the Writings where the “Way” would have added Jesus Ben Sira’s book. The

Writings included the Psalms and the Proverbs which along with the book of Isaiah, Jesus Ben Sira referenced often in “Wisdom”.

Jesus heals a boy who is unable to speak or hear. The reference to fire and water is from “Wisdom” Chapter 15, verse 16. The healing of the boy is symbolic of the difficulty of Wisdom which can only be understood through God’s mercy which is received through faith which is symbolized by prayer. The disciples are shown as being afraid to question Jesus about his teaching on the son of man. Like the boy who has just been healed they too need faith to overcome their hesitancy and seek Wisdom. Humility and serving God go together. Like a little child, the faithful must humble themselves and acknowledge their dependence on God.

God is Almighty and All-knowing. The Lord will reward all who serve Him and punish those who do not serve Him. The fires of hell are contrasted with the desirable fire which is the spirit found among those who serve God together and are thus at peace with each other.

\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\*

Chapter Fourteen, verses 20-27 Chapter Fifteen, verses 1-20 Chapter Sixteen, verses 1-23

Happiness comes from the pursuit of Wisdom. Those who fear the Lord will find Wisdom. Wisdom nourishes and heals. Wisdom will open the mouth of the faithful and bring forth praise for the Lord. Between fire and water, life and death, we must choose since God allows men the freedom to obey or disobey His commandments. God is almighty and will reward and punish all according to their choices.

One faithful child is more valuable than countless unfaithful children to a parent. God, as our Heavenly Father, similarly dissatisfaction with God burns among sinners and will consume their nation. God will destroy them just as He destroyed Sodom and Gamorrah and the Egyptian oppressors of Israel.

The Gospel of Mark Chapter Ten verses 1-31

Jesus has a discussion with the Pharisees concerning divorce in Jesus Ben Sira's book in Chapter 15, just previously addressed by "Mark". Wisdom is said to be like a young bride who feeds the faithful with the bread of learning; symbolized by the miraculous feeding stories. The subsequent references to Jesus as the bridegroom of the faithful show that the "Way" believed that this symbolism need not be gender specific since Wisdom is a spirit and was incarnated as Jesus Ben Sira.

The debate over divorce then symbolizes the Pharisees', as well as Israel's, rejection of Wisdom and Jesus Ben Sira.

Jesus blesses the children who have been brought to him and refers to them as examples of the spirit of all who serve the Lord.

A man who seeks eternal life is reminded of God's commandments by Jesus and then told to forsake his wealth and give it to the poor. The comparison between the rich and the poor was used by the "Way", as well as Jesus Ben Sira, to represent the struggle between the faithful, or poor, and the sinners, the rich. But God alone is Almighty and He alone is able to judge the spirit of a man.

Peter seeks guarantees from Jesus that his service will be rewarded and is told that all of the faithful will be rewarded by God in His own time and way.

\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\* Chapter Sixteen, verses 24-30 Chapter Seventeen, verses 1-32 Chapter Eighteen, verses 1-18

Jesus Ben Sira addresses the reader as his child to begin these verses and emphasizes his desire to instruct clearly and directly. He writes that God is the Almighty Creator who has ordered His creation precisely. Human beings are particularly given special responsibilities concerning the rest of God's creation and special abilities to serve Him. They must obey God's will for them and will be judged according to the choices they make. Israel has also been given special responsibilities and abilities as a nation and as a nation they too must do the Lord's will or suffer His judgement.

However, God is merciful towards those who have strayed if they will repent and turn back to the Lord. God knows man's frailties and has compassion for human beings, like a shepherd who trains his flock out of concern for their fate.

Almsgiving is particularly pleasing to the Lord as a sign of one's desire to serve God.

Peter's questioning of Jesus in "Mark" illustrates the warning by Jesus Ben Sira to practice gracious speech and not place qualifications on good deeds with reproaches or harsh words.

### The Gospel of Mark Chapter Ten verses 32-52

Jesus repeats the fate that awaits him. The disciples are again told that they must be humble like servants, and ready to sacrifice even their lives for God, just as Jesus is prepared to do. In reply, the disciples vow to accept the fate that Jesus

has accepted. But they again seek assurances of rewards and Jesus rebukes them for their unwillingness to have faith in God's judgment.

Jesus heals a blind man who has shown his faith by calling Jesus the son of David and asking for mercy.

\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\*

### Chapter Eighteen, verses 15-29

The disciples' hastily declared vow to Jesus followed by their demands for rewards illustrates the lessons found here on speaking and making vows without the proper forethought or you must not test the Lord when you come to serve Him. Wisdom teaches caution, for sin is all around and change can come suddenly.

Those who humble themselves will repent and find forgiveness at their time of judgment. The blind man in "Mark" meets Jesus suddenly but is prepared to speak to him and to seek his mercy. Through disciplining one's tongue one becomes wise and is able to pass wisdom on to others. This discipline also trains the mind so that one's thoughts and actions will be in agreement with the will of God.

### The Gospel of Mark Chapter Eleven verses 1-33

Jesus' worthiness as the Light of God on earth is symbolized in "Mark" by showing Jesus fulfilling scripture prophecies pertaining to the Messiah. The people who recognize Jesus as Wisdom praise him along the road as the rightful king of Israel.

Jesus curses the fig tree which has no fruit. The tree without fruit is used as a symbol of the fruitless passions



of sinners in “Wisdom”. The greed of the merchants in the temple is one such passion which Jesus condemns by driving the merchants away. Isaiah is quoted concerning God’s will for Israel which the “Way” believed had been subverted by Israel’s leaders. These leaders fear Jesus’ teachings will undermine their authority and plot to kill him. Jesus teaches that faith in God overcomes earthly passions just as the fig tree has withered under Jesus’ curse. With faith in God, all things are possible, even a mountain can be moved.

Jesus teaches that to expect forgiveness from God, you must first be ready to forgive those who have offended you. Jesus is again confronted by the Jewish religious leaders. They will not accept him as God’s servant, just as Jewish history records the rejection of the prophets of past times. Jesus distinguishes between serving God and following human traditions by referring to John the Baptist.

The division between the “Way” and the Pharisees has existed at this time for some two hundred years.

The focus of the conflict is again being centered on the “Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira” which the “Way” is attempting to reintroduce to the Jewish people at this most crucial time in the history of Israel through efforts like the ministry of John the Baptist.

In “Josephus” John the Baptist is said to have been arrested after a group of Jewish religious leaders went to King Herod and advised him that John was creating a disturbance and gaining a large following that might be incited to rebel against Herod. No other details are included except that John was arrested by Herod and then executed. The religious leaders were obviously the same group of Pharisees and priests that Jesus encounters in “Mark”.

\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\*

Chapter Eighteen, verses 30-33 Chapter Nineteen  
Chapter Twenty Chapter Twenty Six, verse 29 Chapter  
Twenty Seven Chapter Twenty Eight

Jesus Ben Sira called God his Father in the spirit of King David as represented in “Mark”. The “Way” believed that the kingdom of Israel had turned away from that spirit. The “Way” believed that Jesus Ben Sira was the Messiah who would turn Israel back into the kingdom of God. Even though he had died physically some two hundred years before, Wisdom is eternal, and Jesus’ book and his spirit lived on in the “Way”.

The fig tree cursed by Jesus in “Mark” illustrates verses 2-4 in Chapter 6 of “Wisdom” where the damage that earthly lusts do to one’s life are likened to a withered tree. These base desires are also the subject here as illustrated by the greedy merchants in the temple in “Mark”. The temptations to sin are inherent in all buying and selling and the house of the merchant who does not fear the Lord is doomed. enemies of the faithful. The importance of disciplined speech and keeping confidences are taught as ways of dealing with such enemies. The necessity of forgiving these enemies is emphasized as well because anger is not God’s will for His children. To be forgiven your sins you must be able to forgive the sins of others.

Again, discipline of the tongue and the pursuit of Wisdom are taught as essential to a people’s harmony within their nation and with other nations. Honesty is also essential for those who practice deceit and slander lead themselves and their nation to ruin. Wisdom is meant to be shared for it brings peace and honor.

The Gospel of Mark Chapter Twelve verses 1-44

The parable of the murder of the master's beloved son is told as an overt indictment of Israel's rejection of Wisdom as manifested in Jesus Ben Sira. The vineyard in particular is used as a symbol of Wisdom in Jesus' book. The temple leaders are depicted as completely understanding this parable, unlike their previous displays of confusion over Jesus' lessons. They are determined to have him arrested.

The Pharisees then attempt to trap Jesus into making a treasonous condemnation of the Roman taxes the Jews were forced to pay. Jesus refuses to be ensnared by their ploy and states that he abides by man's laws in the same way that he obeys God's laws.

The enemies of the "Way", which are the scribes, Pharisees, Herodians and Sadducees, basically the entire Jewish establishment, are disputing the identity and authority of Jesus. This total rejection of Jesus by the Jewish leaders is a serious threat to the existence of the "Way". The "Way", through the ministry of John the Baptist, and their dedication to the spirit of Jesus Ben Sira are seen in the gospel as attempting to preserve their group in their appeals to the common people as much as they are trying to save Israel. The corruption of the scribes is especially emphasized by Jesus who contrasts the spirit of the temple establishment with the spirit of the poor widow who gives of her meager resources to support the temple.

\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\* Chapter Twenty One, verses 1-10 Chapter Twenty Nine, verses 1-28

Historically, the parable in "Mark" is true to the life of Jesus Ben Sira. According to his grandson's forward to the

Greek translation of his book, he saw himself as following in the succession of prophets whom God had sent to Israel in the past. He believed himself to be a son of God. He believed himself to be God's conduit for Wisdom. Wisdom of course, is also characterized as the child of God in the scriptures. The rejection of "Wisdom" by the Pharisees during the reign of Salome and their portrayal of Jesus as an evil villain in second Maccabees effectively served to destroy Jesus Ben Sira and the Zadokites in Israel.

The story concerning the paying of taxes is based here in "Wisdom". All lawlessness is taught as being sinful and destructive. Honesty is an obligation. The faithful should be concerned with acquiring God's rewards rather than acquiring the world's treasures. Jesus Ben Sira writes that the treasures available to those who serve God will protect a people from enemies and disasters much more effectively than military might. When the humble poor, meaning the faithful, pray, God hears them; while the prayers and sacrifices of the proud rich, the unfaithful, are ignored. The story in "Mark" of the widow seems to echo the warning here that those who build their houses using other people's money are gathering stones that might only pave their way to a fiery end.

### The Gospel of Mark Chapter Thirteen verses 1-37

This chapter contains Jesus' message that a terrible battle is about to ensue. We know from the scrolls that the "Way" believed that a war would be fought between the children of light and the children of darkness, but the movement towards war with Rome was also building. The symbol of the desecration of the temple occurred during this time as well as the start of the persecution of the "Way".

The warning to those who are nursing infants would be an obvious reference to the symbol of Rome, Romulus and Remus, who were depicted as infants being nursed by a she-wolf. The fig tree is used again as the symbol of the lusts and desires of the world which will be in full bloom when the Lord will send His Judgment, which the “Way” believed was embodied in Jesus Ben Sira, God’s Wisdom.

In Judaism, Wisdom is traditionally seen as God’s Judgment which is absolutely perfect and just. He will not be found with any sinful nation, not even Israel. The “Way” were trying to awaken Israel to this truth in the spirit of Jesus Ben Sira who had written such warnings in his book. The “Way” believed that the rejection of the “Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira” by the Jewish leaders was symptomatic of the nation’s slide into the same kind of corruption that had led to such suffering and destruction during the Seleucid period.

#### The Gospel of Mark Chapter Fourteen verses 1-11

Jesus is anointed in the manner of the kings of Israel. This symbolizes his right to be the leader of his people. The woman represents Wisdom, who is traditionally given a feminine gender in the Jewish scriptures. Wisdom chooses Jesus Ben Sira to rule Israel because Jesus Ben Sira has accepted Wisdom and is serving God by sharing Wisdom with the faithful at the risk of his own life. Jesus is also called the son of David and Solomon, David’s son, was known for his wisdom. The man who will betray Jesus, Judas Iscariot, criticizes the anointing.

\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\* Chapter TwentyOne, verses 11-28 Chapter Twenty Two, verses 1-26

The discipline of the tongue enables the faithful to control their thoughts and their actions. The contrast is drawn between the wise person whose words are valued and the fool who babbles without thinking and degrades himself and his people just as Judas does by his criticism of the woman's use of expensive oils to anoint Jesus. As has occurred numerous times throughout "Mark", key words are repeated from "Wisdom", presumably to allow the reader to follow more easily the corresponding verses in the two books. Here the reference is to a broken jar, this being compared to the mind of a fool in "Wisdom" and then echoed in the breaking of the jar of ointment in "Mark".

The Gospel of Mark Chapter Fourteen verses 12-52

The last supper story is told, Jesus teaches that the Son of Man must suffer and die. He also condemns he who would betray the Son of Man for that one would suffer spiritual, not just physical death, and eternal damnation. The lesson is like Jesus' earlier teaching that he who would lead a child of God astray would wish that he had never been born.

Judas brings a force of Jesus' enemies to arrest Jesus following the symbolic falling asleep of the disciples which represents Israel's straying from their divine mission and allowing the temptations of the world to overcome their spiritual discipline.

\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\*

Chapter Twenty Two, verses 1-27 Chapter Twenty Three, verses 1-6 Chapter Thirty, verses 1-17

The undisciplined person is described as a fool, a

disgrace to his father and doomed to a life worse than death. This is the one that Jesus tells us in “Mark” is better off never being born. Jesus compares the fool to a drowsy man who is unable to follow a story being told to him. He advises the faithful to avoid such people lest they also be weighed down and made weary by them. He also contrasts the fool, who will be swayed to betray a friend, with the wise who will stand firmly beside a friend through the worst of times. Again a particular phrase about drawing a sword is repeated from “Wisdom” in “Mark” perhaps to help those who are referring to both books to see how the verses in each relate to each other.

The prayer found in “Mark” is a summation of the prayer Jesus Ben Sira writes here. “Mark” may have been concerned again that the proper message be understood. As he had done previously, he takes several verses from “Wisdom” and creates a short but very clear statement of Jesus’ teaching. In “Wisdom” Jesus Ben Sira has just written at length on the subject of the undisciplined fool who cannot be taught and is a danger to those around him. In his prayer, Jesus Ben Sira asks God to place a seal upon his lips so that he will not fall prey to the designs of sinners through his speech. Next he asks God to discipline his mind through Wisdom. He prays too that God will punish him for his sins lest he be overcome by the desires of the world. The prayer in “Mark” then simplifies the prayer in “Wisdom” into Jesus praying for God to protect him from the sinners’ evil designs if it be God’s will, but submitting to God’s judgment as He sees fit.

In chapter 30 of Jesus Ben Sira the importance of a father’s discipline of his son is taught, this follows the order of the previous material that “Mark” has included since chapter 11. This discipline is compared to the poor, another

name for the “Way”, who become robust and strong through hard work, versus the wealthy, or sinners, who become chronically ill and miserable through idleness.

The symbols of bread and wine were used for the spiritual food which Wisdom provided in the Old Testament and “Wisdom”.

The Gospel of Mark

Chapter Fourteen, verses 53-72 Chapter Fifteen

Chapter Sixteen

Jesus is brought before the Jewish authorities and condemned for blasphemy. To this point, a careful comparison of “Mark” with “Wisdom” has shown that the gospel was not written to be read literally. This condemnation of Jesus is therefore meant to represent the story of Jesus Ben Sira’s rejection by the Jewish leaders as influenced by the Pharisees.

According to Josephus, the execution of John the Baptist was said to have been brought about through the influence of Jewish religious leaders who accused him of attempting to incite a rebellion against King Herod. Similarly, the condemnation of the “Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira” by the Jewish establishment was brought about through the influence of the Pharisees who were no doubt involved in John’s execution as well. Were Jesus condemned for blasphemy, he would have been stoned as prescribed by Jewish religious law. That he is instead sent to the Roman authorities follows the same ploy that was used against John. The Pharisees are seeking to destroy the “Way” by accusing them of attempting to organize a rebellion, this time against the Romans. One proof that they would offer is the book that was so cherished by the “Way”, the “Wisdom of Jesus



Ben Sira". Passages in "Wisdom", if taken out of context, can easily be construed as a call to battle against foreign oppressors. He writes many times that God will punish the ungodly. He asks God to rescue the Jewish nation from their oppressors and to destroy the sinful enemies of Israel.

Also from Josephus, we know that the "Way", or Essenes, were renowned for their dedication to peace and would not have been involved in organizing a violent revolt. Therefore, the association of Judas with the arrest of Jesus adds important historical context to the events being recounted. A man named Judas the Galilean did in fact organize a rebellion against the Romans just prior to the time of John the Baptist. His followers were still active at the time of the events in the gospel as the movement known as the Zealots. We know also that Jesus Ben Sira's book was found in the ruins of Masada, the last refuge of the Zealots which was attacked and destroyed by the Romans at the end of the war. If the Pharisees had become fearful and jealous of the popularity of the "Way", as is claimed in the gospel, it would be a simple matter for them to take "Wisdom" to the Roman authorities and explain their own opposition to the book while asserting that the book was known to be revered among the Zealots as well as the "Way". The "Way" would then be placed in the same light as the Zealots and the Romans would be compelled to take action against "Wisdom" and the "Way".

This explains why Judas is depicted as the betrayer of Jesus in "Mark". The Zealots were betraying Jesus Ben Sira and the "Way" by associating themselves with his book and spirit while pursuing a path of violence and terrorism.

This would be symbolized by the reluctant attitude of the Romans concerning Jesus, acting only at the insistence of the Jewish religious leaders and the public outcry they

have created. The “Way” then became a kind of “fall guy” for the Zealots as is represented by the release of Barrabbas instead of Jesus.

The actual execution of Jesus as told in the gospel contains historical details that would be readily identified by the “Way” membership. Since the gospel was not meant to be read literally, “Mark” is at liberty to insert the symbols of the historical events that led to the situation the “Way” was facing.

The key event that prompted the composition of “Mark” and the “Gospel of John” would have been the attack on the site at Qumran and the destruction of the scrolls hidden in the caves nearby.

Since the “Way” had been targeted as a rebellious faction by the Pharisees, public sentiment would have compelled the Romans to move against the “Way”. The information that a library containing seditious material like Jesus Ben Sira’s book was being concealed at Qumran would have provided any justification that the Romans would have needed to raid the site and destroy the scrolls there, as we know did occur. Interestingly, of all the many thousands of scroll fragments found at Qumran during the excavations that have taken place there in our own time, fragments of “Wisdom” have been noticeably absent, save for one small fragment pasted onto the back of another scroll.

If Jesus’ book was the main target and motivation of the attack, then it would follow that the Romans might either confiscate the scrolls of “Wisdom” they found there, or the “Way” might have removed those scrolls in an attempt to save this precious book or themselves from Roman hands. The events that led to the persecution of the “Way” by the Jewish authorities as well as the Romans is then outlined in Chapter 15 of “Mark”. “Mark” uses several names of people

whom the “Way” would have seen as being instrumental in bringing the trouble that had befallen them.

There is a man named Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus. This would be Simon Maccabees whom the “Way” saw as the ruler who became corrupted following the war against the Seleucids. The “Way” derided him in their writings as the last of the men of war. Calling him the father of Alexander and Rufus places him in the same category and preceding two other men whom the “Way” surely would have despised.

Alexander Janneus was the corrupt Jewish high priest whose grisly mass crucifixion of eight hundred Pharisees led to the Pharisees’ ascension to power in Israel at the beginning of the Roman occupation. Rufus would be Annus Rufus who was the procurator of Judea some ten years prior to Pontius Pilate. Rufus was known to have treated the Jewish people very harshly which prompted some to rebel against Rome.

Placing the crucifixion between the names Alexander and Salome alludes again to the crucifixion of the Pharisees by Alexander Janneus which led to the Pharisees being granted extensive power by Alexandra Salome, Alexander’s wife, as a form of compensation. It was after the Pharisees’ rise to power that Jesus Ben Sira’s book was officially banned from the synagogues during the reign of Alexandra Salome.

The allusions to the fragments of bread remaining after the miraculous feedings earlier in the gospel would represent the condition of many of the scrolls following the Roman attack. That the scrolls had been chopped into pieces sometime in the distant past was apparent when they were discovered in modern times.

The women at the end of “Mark” are depicted as being alone and uncertain about how they will move the large stone from the entrance of Jesus’ tomb. We know

that Jesus Ben Sira wrote of Wisdom as a heavy stone. This concern of the women for the weight of the stone reflects the fear the women of the “Way” in particular must have felt over the persecution of the sect. They must have questioned who would remain of the wise teachers and leaders of the “Way” to provide guidance and instruction to the membership amid the confusion and violence that threatened to destroy them all.

The “Way” would have been severely damaged by the Roman attack on their headquarters. Many members must have been killed or injured during the attack as well as in the persecutions that surrounded it. Also, the men of the “Way” would have now been highly motivated to join the rebellion as Josephus tells us, that at least one member certainly did, a man called John who was a known Essene and a Jewish commander in the war. The women in “Mark” are in fact directed to tell some male members to go to Galilee, where we know that the earliest battles of the Jewish revolt were fought.

All of these factors lead to the conclusion that the women of the “Way” were facing a frightening and uncertain time. And “Mark” tells them not to be afraid; that Jesus has been raised from the tomb, and as we have seen, was now found teaching in the “Gospel of Mark”.

The normally accepted ending for the gospel is believed now to have been added many years after the original writing of the book. It is more likely that the gospel should end with Chapter 16, verse 8, which reads that the women told no one what they had seen and heard because they were afraid. This verse sums up the continuously repeated admonitions of the gospel and “Wisdom” that the tongue must be disciplined and that the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord.

Jesus Ben Sira prayed that God would keep a seal on his lips and had written that the faithful should not fan the flames of a sinner's fire lest those flames envelope the faithful as well. Then he distributed his "Wisdom" in complete disregard for his own advice and personal safety. The "Way" drank from Jesus' cup, and like their teacher suffered terribly for attempting to show men the Light. Certainly the "Way" was aware that their efforts to reach the Jewish people and the gentiles with public teaching and preaching was the major cause for the persecution that they were being subjected to. In their scrolls the "Way" wrote that they believed that this was their mission from God. Their suffering was to be the sacrifice that would atone for the sins of the unfaithful. According to "Wisdom" and the scrolls, God would glorify them as they had glorified God and would use their sacrifice to change the hearts of sinners and bring God's Kingdom to earth; as well as reward their faith eternally at the resurrection. They are said by Josephus to have gone willingly to their executions and to have smilingly undergone the most gruesome tortures rather than deny their faith or renounce their sacred books.

\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\* Chapter Twenty Two, verse 27 Chapter Twenty Three Chapter Thirty, verses 1-17

The thoughts of Jesus Ben Sira turn to the subject of discipline in the verses that coincide with the last chapters of "Mark". Jesus prays that his Heavenly Father will discipline him like any good father who loves his son should. He mentions the punishment of whipping as an example of a loving father's duty in disciplining his son and this is illustrated in "Mark" by the scourging of Jesus Christ by the Romans. The self-control exhibited by Jesus during his

interrogation in “Mark” illustrates “Wisdom”’s emphasis on the disciplining of the tongue. The denials of Peter which include the use of oaths are illustrations of the lesson’s here against coarse language and habitual swearing which lead to regret and sorrow.

Fornication and adultery are subjects found here that take on added dimensions when compared with the last part of “Mark”. We have seen that Jesus Ben Sira has previously written of Wisdom as the bride of the faithful. The rejection of Jesus Ben Sira and his book by the Jewish leaders is then comparable to the sin against a marriage vow which is condemned in this section.

The women who are the focus at the end of “Mark” are in a situation where these lessons would apply also. We can see the use of the name of Salome in “Mark” as representing the Jewish high priestess Alexandra Salome who was responsible for the Pharisees’ rise to power and the subsequent rejection of the “Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira”. This corresponds to the verses here that Jesus directs specifically towards women, who, just like men, are bound to their sacred marriage vows.

The other women spoken of in “Mark” would represent the female members of the “Way” who were being faced with separation from their husband and teachers by the violence overtaking Judea and the “Way”. Since “Mark” emphasizes women here and Jesus Ben Sira ends chapter 23 of “Wisdom” with an emphasis on women, it is apparent that the “Gospel of Mark” was meant to end at chapter 16, verse 8, with the women holding their tongues due to their fear. The last verse of chapter 23 in “Wisdom” is on the fear of the Lord and the joy found in obeying the Lord’s commandments.

# Part Two

## The Gospel of John

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## Introduction

Historically, the gospel of John was always assumed to have been the last of the four canonical gospels to be written. Recently, however, some biblical scholars have been reconsidering the later date which “John” has usually been assigned. A new theory places “John” much closer to the time that “Mark” was thought to have been composed and well before “Matthew” and “Luke”.

The gospel of John was in fact written at the same time as the gospel of Mark. “John” takes up where “Mark” leaves off in the “Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira”, at chapter 24. The sum total of material in “Mark” is approximately equal to the total in “John” and added together they comprise approximately the total in

“Wisdom”. The “Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira” seems to be written in two parts as well, with the second part, beginning with chapter 24, being similar to the first part but with an added depth and complexity. So “John” seems to be expanding on the themes of “Mark” in conjunction with the development seen in the second part of their common source, “Wisdom”.

Additionally, the historical references seen in “Mark” are noticeably absent from “John” where the emphasis is placed more on the person and teachings of Jesus Christ, who I have shown was the Messiah, the “Teacher of Righteousness” of the “Way”, Jesus Ben Sira.

“John” focuses on how and why Jesus Ben Sira is the Messiah, the Wisdom of God, by recounting the teachings of Jesus and the material pertaining to the Messiah as Wisdom

which is found in the scriptures in books like the Psalms, the Proverbs, and the books of the Prophets, especially Isaiah, which were all primary sources for Jesus Ben Sira's writings as well.

For the "Way" Wisdom was symbolized as the Light of God which is manifested to mankind as God's Word. Jesus Ben Sira's teachings, manifested Wisdom to the "Way". For them he was the Word made flesh, the Messiah described in the scriptures. Since God cannot be separated from His Wisdom, Light, Word, Jesus was, of necessity, unable to be separated from God and so was the Son, or Child of God whom God had chosen to represent Himself to mankind.

And so we have the theological concept of the Trinity. God the Father and Creator, Jesus Christ the Son, also called the Judgment or Wisdom of God through which He creates and maintains His universe, and the Holy Spirit of God which comes to those who accept God's Wisdom and serve Him faithfully.

These principles are an integral foundation of the beliefs found in the writings of the "Way" discovered near Qumran as well as in the "Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira" which the "Way" accepted as God's Word.

"John" then preserves the thought processes and basis for the belief system which the "Way" was taught by Jesus Ben Sira to be the essence of Judaism from which the mainstream Jewish teachers and leaders had strayed. This is also the source of the other name which the "Way" adopted, the Essenes.

Since Jesus was of the priesthood class his teachings also would represent the "inside" theology of the highest ranking authorities of Judaism in the period before the Hasmoneans took power after the revolt. The original members of the "Way" were more than likely privileged to similar teachings

as insiders during the high priesthood of Simon the Just. So the book that Jesus wrote and the organization of the “Way” also represent an attempt to reach out to the Jewish people with a higher level of thought than they may have had available to them before.

When reading the gospel of John the commentary of Augustine concerning “John” is very helpful. His tractates on the gospel provide extensive expositions of each verse.

When the scriptures were translated into Latin by Jerome around 400 C.E. it is thought that Augustine assisted him and upon Jerome’s death actually completed the project. A point of contention is said to have arisen between the two scholars concerning the apochryphal books, including the book of Sirach, that is Jesus Ben Sira. Jerome had decided to omit the books completely on the grounds that the Hebrew Bible did not include them. He cited the same questions raised by the Jewish authorities concerning their origins and value.

The Church council which had authorized the Latin version was in agreement with Jerome and apparently this would have been the final word on the matter had Jerome not passed away before the translations had been completed.

The work passed to Augustine and he is said to have vigorously lobbied for the inclusion of the apochryphal books. So important were the books to Augustine that he demanded that they be included or he would refuse to undertake the remaining work that needed to be done on the other books. Since the translation had been many years in the making and Augustine’s knowledge and experience were considered indispensable to completing the project, the council relented though they refused to give full canonical status to the books in question.

Augustine’s Latin version of the “Wisdom of Jesus

Ben Sira” considered with his tractates on “John” give evidence that he was fully aware of the relationship between the two books.

His explanation of the beginning verses of “John” go into great detail as to the meaning of the term, the Word, and its use as a substitute for the term, Wisdom. He goes on to show how the Word or Wisdom of God is the idea that God had in mind when He created the universe. This idea is the Word that “John” wrote of. Jesus Christ then is the very idea that God had in mind for a man when He created the human race, or the Word made flesh.

Augustine ends his first tractate on “John” by stating that one who has found Wisdom has found God, again, since God’s Wisdom is wholly His own and cannot be separated from Him. This makes Jesus Christ God as well since Jesus is Wisdom manifested on earth. Those who accept Jesus Christ, Wisdom, then too become one with God in mind and spirit.

In translating “Wisdom” Augustine made several changes and additions compared to the Greek and Hebrew sources that he utilized. These changes and additions could be one of the reasons for his loss of credibility in some scholars’ opinions. However, the changes and additions do serve to bring out the similarities between “Wisdom” and “John” which he also made study notes for that were included in the Latin translation. Though not declaring overtly, the changes do indicate strongly that Augustine believed that Jesus Ben Sira was in fact the Jesus called Christ in the gospels.

Some prominent additions are the words that Augustine adds in chapter 24 of “Wisdom” which were not in the original version but are very close to the language used in the opening of “John”. Perhaps most telling is the addition of

an instructional note in chapter 24 explaining that Wisdom is continuing to speak about Herself that was placed before verses that are clearly not included in the previous quotation in the original Hebrew but are obviously meant to be words spoken by Jesus Ben Sira about himself.

I will address the question of how this division concerning the apocryphal books developed within the Church following the comparison of the gospel of John with Jesus Ben Sira's book. It is interesting to note that in the 1950's a biblical scholar of international stature recognized the similarity in the time frame of the newly discovered Dead Sea Scrolls and the writing of the "Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira" and attempted to connect the two with the gospels as I have tried to do.

His research was apparently centered on the gospel of Matthew, however, and his very extensive and careful comparison of "Matthew" with "Wisdom" revealed, in his opinion, differences that precluded any possibility of Jesus Christ being modeled on or representing Jesus Ben Sira.

My own curiosity concerning the possible connection between Jesus Ben Sira and the gospels was similarly raised by the concurrent time period of "Wisdom" with the scrolls, however, the striking similarities I saw in the opening verses of "John" to the opening verses of chapter 24 of "Wisdom" led me to a different conclusion.

### The Gospel of John Chapter One verses 1-28

The gospel of John begins with theological teachings on Wisdom, which is represented as the Word of God. The Word of God has made God known to mankind even though God is, by definition, beyond man's understanding.

Jesus Christ is the Word made flesh and is able to

show men Wisdom through his life and his teachings. As God's Child, another representation of Wisdom, Jesus Christ has been chosen by God to show men His Light, or Wisdom, in order that others may also be brought into God's Family.

The role of John the Baptist was to lead men to Jesus. This represents the role the "Way" believed was the true mission of Israel, that is to bring mankind to the Light of Wisdom.

A quote from Isaiah is not the exact quote and so indicates that "John" is not to be read literally.

The Pharisees symbolize the rejection of Jesus Ben Sira by the Jewish leaders by questioning John the Baptist's right to baptize and preach about the Light which has come into the world in Jesus Christ. The Pharisees were emphasizing the customs and rituals of Judaism which the "Way" taught were to be but a preparation that would enable one to receive Wisdom not an end in itself as the Pharisees seemed to have come to see them.

\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\* Chapter Twenty Four  
verses 1-29

Jesus Ben Sira begins chapter 24 as he began chapter 1 of his book. He returns to the topic of Wisdom itself. He writes that Wisdom comes from the mouth of God, hence the use of Word as a symbol of Wisdom in "John".

Wisdom rules God's creation and God created by Wisdom. God chose Israel to bring Wisdom to mankind through the scriptures and the Laws of Moses, the Ten Commandments. This sacred mission was being neglected by Israel in the opinion of Jesus Ben Sira and the "Way". Wisdom is seen as a living thing that grows and brings

forth fruit in the manner of the trees and vines. It nourishes and satisfies. It replaces the earthly desires of the flesh with a craving for learning and righteousness. Wisdom keeps man from sinning. It is inexhaustible and will never be fully understood by any human being because it is an aspect of God.

The Gospel of John Chapter One verses 29-51

Jesus comes to John to be baptized and is identified as the Messiah who is spoken of in the Bible. Jesus is said to come before John, just as Wisdom existed before all creation and exists forever, and would come to the believer whom John would baptize and then introduce to the teachings and spirit of Jesus Ben Sira in conjunction with the “Way”.

The Gospel of John Chapter One verses 29-51  
(Continued)

The historical acceptance of Jesus Ben Sira by the “Way” is represented in the acceptance of Jesus by John the Baptist’s followers.

The fig tree symbolizes the desires of the flesh, which, apparently, Nathaniel was under the sway of before joining the “Way”.

The similarity to the role that Simon the just played in preparing the way for the “Way” and Jesus Ben Sira can be seen in John the Baptist’s ministry as well.

\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\* Chapter Twenty Four, verses 30-34 Chapter Twenty Five, verses 1-15

Jesus speaks directly and tells of his mission to instruct mankind in Wisdom. The words used by Jesus in “John” of come and see neatly summarize the idea of being brought to the Light, or having one’s eyes opened.

The characteristics shown by John’s followers are praised here by Jesus Ben Sira. They include the peace and harmony between the brothers and their neighbors, their friendship, honesty, their resistance to the fleshly desires, their patient attentiveness and their excellent judgment in accepting John and now Jesus; like a man chooses a sensible wife, which is used as a symbol for Wisdom by Jesus Ben Sira.

#### The Gospel of John Chapter Two verses 1-11

The story of the wedding feast in Cana symbolizes the marriage of Jesus Ben Sira and Wisdom. Wisdom is represented as a bride in “Wisdom” and so Jesus Ben Sira is the bridegroom. Jesus is given a task by his mother, which symbolizes Wisdom or God choosing Jesus Ben Sira, the Child of God, to bring Wisdom, now symbolized as wine, to mankind.

In “Wisdom”, Jesus Ben Sira used the image of himself as a gatherer of grapes who filled his wine-press for the benefit of those seeking Wisdom. Wisdom was symbolized as a vine which is abundantly fruitful, filling the wine-press of the faithful.

Jesus Ben Sira also characterized himself as a gleaner who arrived last in the fields of instruction, but by God’s grace filled his wine-press first, which is symbolized by the comments here about the best wine being served last contrary to normal custom.



\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\*

Chapter Twenty Five, verses 13-26 Chapter Twenty Six,  
verses 1-27

The verses here are concerned with the characteristics of a good wife as opposed to those of a bad wife. The many examples serve as an allegory for the blessings Wisdom brings as opposed to the suffering and misery brought by the ways of the world; man's wisdom.

The imagery from the "Song of Solomon" is added to identify Wisdom as the object of Solomon's praise and love.

The allusion to the "Song of Solomon" precedes teachings on the importance of fidelity and loyalty to one's wife, meaning as we have seen, Wisdom, which serves to remind the Jewish reader of Israel's mission as God's chosen people.

The Gospel of John Chapter Two verses 13-25

Jesus confronts the vendors and moneychangers at the temple. When questioned by the temple authorities, Jesus makes it clear that he believes that the sacrifice system has become a hinderance to the Jews' fulfilling their true purpose according to God's will; that of bringing Wisdom to all the peoples of the earth. He refers to the story of Jonah to indicate the Jewish rejection of God's will, which was symbolized by the rejection of God's will by Jonah. The destruction of the temple is then foreseen because of this failure of the system to serve God according to His will.

One quality that Wisdom is traditionally given in Jewish theology is as God's Judgment which is perfect and always just. Jesus is shown as possessing this Judgment as he avoids

revealing his identity because of the lack of faith he has found in the temple. He knows that the people there are not able to accept him.

\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\* Chapter Twenty Six, verses 28-29 Chapter Twenty Seven, verses 1-3

The one who turns from righteousness back to sin is cursed with a violent death by the Lord. As we have seen in “John”, Israel has done exactly this in the opinion of the “Way”. Jesus also writes that the temptation to sin is ingrained in all buying and selling. This leads to the corruption found in the temple by Jesus in “John”. Without the fear of the Lord to guide one’s actions, greed will overcome one’s business dealings and lay waste to one’s house. This reference to the overthrowing of one’s house in “Wisdom” is interpreted in “John” to symbolize the destruction of Israel’s house; the nation and the temple they maintain as the house of the Lord. The commercialization of the temple, like any business dealing not done in good faith, must inevitably lead to corruption and destruction as surely as a stone is split by a stake.

The Gospel of John Chapter Three verses 1-21

The story told here is of Nicodemus, a Pharisee who is also described as a Jewish teacher. He went to Jesus and professed his belief in Jesus’ ministry based on the signs that Jesus had performed. Jesus decries the lack of understanding in one who must rely on earthly signs to believe by engaging Nicodemus in a discussion of the nature of faith as a spiritual gift from above which God bestows

on man through Wisdom, which Nicodemus claims no knowledge of.

Those who accept God's Love/Light/Child/Son/Wisdom, all synonymous terms, will then become children of God themselves. Those who reject Wisdom are condemned by their lack of faith in the Lord's perfect Judgment and mercy. The characterization of the Son as God's Judgment emphasizes the nature of Wisdom as a part of God, His Mind, which the human race can share and have faith in through Jesus Ben Sira.

\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\* Chapter Twenty Seven, verses 4-29

Jesus reiterates that a person's conversation reveals his spirit and attitude towards God. The faithful should be prudent in their speech and should be careful to consider the speech of those they interact with to determine the faith or lack of faith in others. Like birds that flock together with their own kind, the faithful in this way can find those who are similarly faithful. Several examples of behavior that reveal a person's spiritual development are described by Jesus.

Quarrelsome people, those who swear and curse, those who change their opinions constantly, those whose laughter is uncontrolled and offensive and those who reveal confidences without any thought of the consequences are to be avoided by those who seek Wisdom; as well as mischievous, deceitful, derisive and abusive types.

The reference to the story of Moses and the bronze serpent would address the criticism of Jesus Ben Sira by the Pharisees who charged that he was making himself an idol. Just as Moses used an idol to cure the Israelites of snake bites which were a result of their rebelliousness towards

God, Jesus Ben Sira declared himself to be inspired by God and filled with Wisdom as 'a son of God while calling all to be instructed and share in his glory.

In his book Jesus himself teaches how dangerous such a course of action is. But like Moses, Jesus apparently believed that the situation demanded extraordinary action regardless of the consequences; that he would be lifted up, or worshipped as an idol as well as lifted up in the sense of being executed or crucified.

This self-sacrifice was a central part of the beliefs of the "Way". They saw it as God's will that His most faithful servants must willingly give their lives to atone for Israel's, even the whole world's sins, to reach people so that they might accept Wisdom. The son of man must die and be reborn as the son of God.

### The Gospel of John Chapter Three verses 22-36

Jesus Ben Sira is a conduit for Wisdom. John the Baptist describes himself as one who would lead people to Jesus. This illustrates the idea of Wisdom as a process that takes time. John explains that gradually, the faithful will come to place less importance on his teachings as they grow in their knowledge of Jesus' teachings. And, as one's understanding of Wisdom increases one's former sinful life loses its importance.

The Son of God, which is Wisdom, is, as a part of God, a spirit and eternal. This eternal Word of God is the source of the life found in God's creation and the eternal character of life is revealed to those who accept Jesus as God's Son. Those who reject wisdom will fall prey to sin and be subject to punishment and death individually and as a nation.

Historically, the issue of what John the Baptist's mission actually was allegedly became the focus of great concern for the Jewish religious establishment. According to Josephus, the Jewish historian, the arrest and execution of John was demanded by a group of Jewish religious leaders on the grounds that he was attempting to organize a revolt not against Rome, but against the Jewish ruler, King Herod.

John identified Jesus as the one who has the bride, meaning the one who has Wisdom, as we have seen. John intended to introduce the people of Judea to the teachings of Jesus and all the members of the "Way" would also have dedicated themselves to this goal as well.

John, however, must have had an exceptionally inspiring and charismatic personality. Again, there is an inherent danger that people will place their faith in a teacher instead of the lesson. To illustrate this point, "John" refers to the story of Moses' bronze serpent which became an object of idol worship.

John the Baptist's deference to Jesus as Wisdom incarnate relates to Jesus Ben Sira's own teaching that God is the true and only source of Wisdom and that Jesus' mission was to lead the faithful to a closer relationship with God.

Though the religious leaders may have claimed that John had become a threat to the king's authority, more realistically, they were reacting to the threat that they saw to their own authority. John had the ability to reach people and lead them to accept Jesus Ben Sira as the Messiah and "Wisdom" had been officially rejected by the Jewish religious leaders. Of course, these leaders were closely identified with the Pharisees.

The Gospel of John  
Chapter Four verses 1-54

The story of the Samaritan woman whom Jesus encounters and takes time to instruct is especially significant when looked at in the context of first century Judea. At this time there was tremendous tension between the Samaritans and the Jews.

This animosity reached the point of actual battles in which many casualties resulted on both sides. ☺

In keeping with the peace-seeking mission of the “Way”, Jesus is portrayed as an ambassador of reconciliation between the two peoples. In this story the acceptance of the teachings of Jesus Ben Sira is shown as resolving issues that lie at the root of the conflict.

Jesus teaches that God should be sought in Wisdom by each individual and not in any particular place or through rituals. God is the spirit of truth, the spirit manifested by Jesus, Wisdom, which is the salvation of all mankind. This is the fruit that Judaism is meant to bear. The goal of all the Jewish teachers and prophets of the bible. These old testament figures were revered by both the Samaritans and the Jews.

Jesus returns to Cana in Galilee and continues the theme of reconciliation by healing the son of a royal official who then becomes a believer.

Historically, we must remember that Josephus gives credit to the Essenes, the “Way”, for being healers and experts in the use of medicinal herbs and stones. Jesus Ben Sira refers also to the Wisdom that is revealed in the healing power of medicinal herbs. It would make sense that the “Way” would gain attention from non-members through ministering to their physical ailments.

\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\* Chapter Twenty Seven,  
verse 30 Chapter Twenty Eight, verses 1-26 Chapter Twenty  
Nine, verses 1-28

The verses here focus on the sinful nature of anger and the holding of grudges. Forgiveness is essential to the healing of an individual as well as a nation.

The common bond of all men must be recognized along with the truth that God alone is able to judge men fairly. Only God is worthy of anger towards men for the Lord is able to know men's hearts and take count of their sins.

Meaningful dialogue is the key to reconciliation between those who are at strife. The fire of dispute can be increased by blowing on it or extinguished by spitting on it and we alone must choose which will come from our mouths.

The theme is continued by teachings on the importance of honesty with and kindness towards one's neighbors. The faithful should be ready to extend a helping hand to those in need and also to show their gratitude to those who help them by repaying their kindness.

In particular, Jesus carefully considers the relationship between the guarantor of a loan and the loan's recipient. These kinds of obligations should not be taken lightly by those who fear the Lord.

#### The Gospel of John Chapter Five verses 1-47

The healing of a blind man is used to introduce a lesson on the special relationship that Jesus Christ enjoys with his Heavenly Father. A relationship said by Jesus himself to surpass that known by John the Baptist. John had been well-received by a great many Jews, but had taught that he was only a stepping stone to someone far greater, namely Jesus.

Jesus questions the intelligence of those who are rejecting him even though they had accepted John the Baptist who had said that he was only preparing them for Jesus' arrival.

Jesus Ben Sira wrote of himself as being the heir to the Wisdom of the scriptural teachers and as having built upon their achievements to attain an even greater understanding of the Lord.

\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\*

### Chapter Thirty, verses 1-17

The nature of the relationship between a good father and his son is the subject addressed here. This relationship must center on discipline and instruction which are the signs of a father's love for his child.

The perception of Wisdom is very much the same in Jesus' book. It is difficult and requires discipline and a willingness to learn and develop one's mind. The rewards are not immediate or obvious, but over time the harshness is replaced by joy, like the health enjoyed by a body well-exercised. As in "John", the son then becomes so like the father that he can take his place.

### The Gospel of John Chapter Six verses 1-15

The story of the miraculous feeding of the 5,000 is repeated as in the gospel of Mark.

In order to emphasize the symbolic connection to Moses, the previous verses bring the role of Moses to mind and Jesus declares that the writings of Moses should be seen as referring to Jesus, as Wisdom.



The problem of the people misinterpreting the real meaning of the miracle is raised again when Jesus must flee to avoid being made an earthly king.

The story of the man possessed by the demon called Legion is not repeated in "John". This reference to the legion in "Mark" helps to clarify the significance of the use of the number 5,000 as the number fed. The story of the demon-possessed man contained phrases and teachings that were found in the portion of "Wisdom" that "Mark" was working from. Since those teachings are phrased differently in the part of "Wisdom" that "John" is considering, it follows that the story of the legion is not repeated here. However, the subject of discipline is addressed in "Wisdom" from the aspect of a father and child and so "John" prefaces the miraculous feeding with teachings on Jesus' special relationship with God the Father. The author of "John" could assume that his readers would have read "Mark" as well and so would have known the significance of the 5,000.

\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\* Chapter Thirty, verses 18-25 Chapter Thirty One, verses 1-31 Chapter Thirty Two, verses 1-23

The subject of food is addressed in a discussion of the necessities of life. The true necessity for human beings is taught to be Wisdom.

The concerns of the apostles in "John" that they cannot afford to buy food for the 5,000 illustrates the lesson here on wealth and the sinfulness of making the pursuit of gold one's goal in life.

After teaching on the proper conduct required at table, the subject of wine is addressed. Again, wine has been used as a symbol for Wisdom previously in "Wisdom". He

writes that wine is life for humanity. But it must be taken in moderation and its power recognized.

Humility is required on the part of both the great and the young when people gather at table to eat and drink. Each have their roles to play.

The verse in “John” concerning Jesus’ rapid withdrawal to avoid the people who would crown him their king is seen as a neatly worded summary of the cautions here on recognizing the need for discipline in order to avoid overconfidence and pride as well as to preserve one’s life. This will be shown by one who fears the Lord.

### The Gospel of John Chapter Six verses 16-71

The same story that follows the feeding of the five thousand in “Mark” is repeated here in “John”. The disciples, representing Israel, are in a boat when they encounter a storm. Jesus walks on the water to come to them with words of comfort and they are miraculously transported to their destination safely.

The need for a new Moses, to reach the gentiles and to bring Israel back to its proper course, is symbolized. The “Way” believed that Jesus Ben Sira had been sent by God for that purpose and that peace would come if the Jewish leaders would realize that Jesus was not their enemy but their salvation.

“John” next presents the reasoning behind the acceptance of Jesus as the new Moses by having Jesus explain his mission to the Jews at Capernaum. The images of bread and wine are changed into flesh and blood, all symbols used for Wisdom which Jesus embodies as the Son of God. Just as Wisdom invited the faithful to eat and drink of Her in “Wisdom”, so too Jesus here offers himself as spiritual

food, the true necessity of life, even life itself, which can only be given by God.

The chapter ends with the identification of Judas as the disciple who would betray Jesus. This represents Judas the Galilean, who began the Zealot movement. The “Way” believed that the Zealots had betrayed the spirit of “Wisdom” by professing to be Jesus’ followers while engaging in lawlessness and violence. It is likely that Judas had been introduced to “Wisdom” by the “Way” and had once been a member.

\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\* Chapter Thirty Two, verse 24 Chapter Thirty Three, verses 1-19

The faithful need not fear trials, for those who fear the Lord and accept Wisdom are delivered from trials. On the other hand, those who are hypocritical towards God, Jesus writes, are like a boat tossed by a storm, as illustrated in “Mark” and “John”.

God’s use of particular people for special purposes is likened to the setting aside of certain days for festivals according to God’s will. Jesus then explains that he believed himself to have been chosen by God to bring instruction to mankind. He adopts the metaphor of a grape-picker who fills his wine-press, just as he had previously used the symbols of a vine and the fruit of the vine that fills the wine-press for Wisdom.

An allusion to Judas is included as God is said to not only exalt the faithful, but also to curse the sinner to a far less desirable role.

The Gospel of John Chapter Seven verses 1-52

“John” tells us that Jesus was now avoiding the Jews because he feared for his life.

Jesus’ brothers question his sincerity and advise him to go to Jerusalem for the festival and openly confront those among the Jews who will not accept him. If he is truly sent from God then he will prevail and all will believe.

Jesus at first dismisses their suggestion but then does indeed go to the temple and openly teach the crowds. He again refers to Moses as the precursor for his own role and declares himself to be sent from God. He beseeches the crowd to use good judgment, a symbol of Wisdom, in assessing his character and value.

The influence of the Pharisees is shown by their power to demand his arrest.

Jesus tells the people that he will not be with them much longer, but will go one day and search though they may, they will not be able to find him.

He again offers Wisdom, symbolized as a drink for those who thirst and he is again rejected by many who question his background and motives.

The Pharisees are seen as playing a major role in casting dispersions against him while urging the crowds to reject him as they and the temple authorities have done.

When Nicodemus, a Jewish teacher, attempts to reason with the crowds for a fair judgment of Jesus, he is accused of being a Galilean. This label was understood to apply to those who were associated with the violent and lawless rebels.

\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\* Chapter Thirty Three,  
verses 18-24

Jesus Ben Sira has explained that his purpose in writing his book is to bring Wisdom to all who are receptive to learning.

Now he warns leaders, both civil and religious, that Wisdom will not be bound by their authority but will come to all in accordance with the will of God. ☺

He also teaches that the wise person will not allow family - members to rule their life. You should run your own affairs and find your own place in the world. Upon your death the proper heirs will then be left with your honorable name and their rightful inheritance.

The story of Moses, who guided the Jews to the edge of the promised land before dying and leaving Israel as his legacy, connects these verses to “John” and his reference to Moses as well as his writing of Jesus’ allusion to his imminent death as he reached out to the crowd to leave the spirit of Wisdom with those who would believe.

The historical facts of the Pharisees’ responsibility for the rejection of Jesus Ben Sira and his book are mentioned frequently in “John” in the guise of the Pharisees’ first century attacks on Jesus Christ.

The most damning accusation against Jesus Ben Sira in the first century, his alleged association with the rebels of Judas the Galilean, is seen in the final remarks about the rejection of any Galilean prophet.

The Gospel of John Chapter Eight verses 1-11

These verses appear likely to have been later additions to “John” and will not be included in this study of the gospel. Chapter Eight verses 12-59

The discussion with the crowd and the Pharisees at the temple continues in these verses.

Jesus declares himself to be Wisdom, as symbolized by the Light which is Life itself. The Pharisees again reject him as simply a charlatan who claims that which is not possible for anyone to prove as either true or false. Jesus tells them that their judgment is clouded because they are not allowing God to fill them with Wisdom, also characterized as God’s Judgment. The Judgment from above is the source of Jesus’ knowledge. He is the Son of God and not of the world.

Jesus again refers to his approaching death and promises that his legacy will be Wisdom and Truth for those who follow his teachings.

The Truth, which is from God, is liberating, as compared to lies, which are from the devil and enslaving. The eternal nature of Wisdom, as a part of God, is again proclaimed. Jesus as the embodiment of Wisdom, God’s Son, claims this eternal Life for himself and all who follow him and become God’s children as well. The disbelievers are prepared to stone Jesus for blasphemy at this point but he escapes.

\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\* Chapter Thirty Three, verses 16-33 Chapter Thirty Four, verses 1-13

The verses “John” has drawn from in chapter 8 show the same kind of backtracking pattern found in “Mark”. “John” has returned to Jesus Ben Sira’s identification of himself

with Wisdom, now symbolized as Light. The verses that follow in “Wisdom” are reprised as teachings on maintaining your own integrity rather than bowing to the pressures of family members or friends. This is seen in “John” as Jesus now stands up to the Pharisees, his religious brothers, and maintains his right to claim his special relationship with the Lord.

Again one’s legacy is the next subject in “Wisdom” as in “John”.

The verses in “Wisdom” now turn to slavery and discipline which have been used to describe Wisdom earlier in Jesus’ book.

But the roles of slave and master are now reversed as Wisdom becomes the slave and likened to oneself or one’s brother, life itself which is as close as a blood relationship, or as Jesus says, a relationship bought with blood.

Now the feminine gender of Wisdom has been changed to the masculine gender. This indicates further Jesus Ben Sira’s claim as Wisdom, the servant of mankind, as prophesied in the book of Isaiah.

If you drive your servant away through ill treatment, where will you seek him? As Jesus repeats in “John”, Israel is rejecting Wisdom and becoming slave to sin.

Jesus continues with lessons on discerning the truth or falsity of beliefs, which are represented as dreams, divinations and omens. The faithful must recognize the characteristics of that which is sent from God. The law of God is fulfilled not through fantasy or illusion but through Wisdom

Jesus’ escape at the end of chapter 8 adds a personal touch as here Jesus Ben Sira recounts his education in the ways of the world during his travels and the use that he put this experience to in escaping danger.

The Gospel of John

Chapter Nine

verses 1-41

Jesus heals a man who was blind from birth. This miraculous healing is dismissed by the unbelievers and especially the Pharisees. Confronted with seemingly irrefutable evidence of Jesus' power, the Pharisees simply refuse to accept what they are seeing and are seen to be themselves blinded by their own pride and stubbornness. This pride and stiff-necked closedmindedness binds them to sin and demonstrates their enslavement as Jesus has taught in the preceding chapter.

Historically, this brings to mind the expulsion of the "Way" from the synagogues which would have occurred following the complete renunciation of Jesus Ben Sira's book and person by the Jewish leaders in the first century C.E.

\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\* Chapter Thirty Four,  
verses 14-20

The eyes are made the focus of Jesus' teaching in this section. The fear of the Lord, which has been taught as the beginning of Wisdom and further characterized as the entirety of Wisdom is spiritual salvation. Wisdom encourages and fortifies the believer. It gives the believer his direction and turns his eyes to God. The Lord blesses the faithful and makes their eyes sparkle, reflecting their soul's health and vitality.

The Gospel of John Chapter Ten verses 1-42

Jesus describes himself as the shepherd who will lay



down his life for his sheep. His sheep know him by his voice which Wisdom empowers them to recognize.

The belief that Wisdom, God's Child, now incarnated as Jesus, is inseparable from God is not acceptable to many of the Jews, as influenced by the Pharisees, who condemn Jesus as a blasphemer. The fruits of Wisdom that they are seeing in the miraculous healings of Jesus cannot sway them from their disbelief. As "John" has remarked previously though, the number of believers had grown as more people were convinced and began to accept Jesus despite the threat of being disenfranchised from their synagogues. This clarifies the problem that the Pharisees felt compelled to address with their campaign against Jesus Ben Sira. His growing popularity and the growing status of the "Way" threatened their own status and position in Judea.

\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\* Chapter Thirty Four, verses 21-31 Chapter Thirty Five, verses 1-16

The corruption which had infected the temple is the target of criticism. The Most High will not honor the sacrifices of those who are not faithful in spirit. The allusion to Wisdom is seen in the likening of the offering of an ill-gotten sacrifice to the murdering of a father's son before his eyes. Quite clearly this image is reflected in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ in the gospels.

The Lord will not hear the voice of the hypocrite who prays and sacrifices but continues in disbelief and sin. On the other hand, the righteous daily make acceptable sacrifices through their faithfulness, kindness and joyous service to God.

The Lord cannot be bribed for He is All-knowing and His Judgment is perfect. He will hear the prayer of those who are wronged and they will receive justice. Those who

are righteous will be repaid for their faithfulness in God's own time and way.

The Gospel of John Chapter Eleven verses 1-57

This chapter contains the story of Lazarus whom Jesus raised from the dead. This story held several layers of meaning for the "Way".

The book that we know as the second book of Maccabees was written in the first century B.C.E. and was well known in the first century C.E. in Judea.

A central character in second Maccabees, which is set in the Seleucid era, is an elderly Jew named Eleazar. Eleazar is the Hebrew translation for the name Lazarus. That his resurrection would cause such consternation for the Pharisees is consistent with their reaction to the revival of interest in Jesus Ben Sira being spearheaded by the "Way".

In second Maccabees Eleazar displays the self-sacrificing spirit so important to the "Way". Rather than eat defiled food, pork, as he is commanded to do by the Hellenizers, he allows himself to be tortured and killed. The story tells of his certainty that God will reward his faithfulness at the resurrection. The symbolic resurrection of Lazarus by Jesus in "John" confirms the harmony that the "Way" enjoyed with these beliefs.

This reference to Lazarus and such beliefs, which the Pharisees also shared, is troublesome for the Pharisees because the events being recounted in second Maccabees followed the expulsion of Jesus from the high priesthood and the exile of the Zadokites to Egypt. Considering that the most pious Jews, like Eleazar, were the Hasidim supporters of Jesus in his fight to hold the high priesthood, we see that

the Pharisees are being reminded first, of their refusal to join the other Hasidim in that struggle, and second, of the role Jesus played in rallying the pious Jews who then played such an important role in the successful Maccabean revolt against the Seleucids.

\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\* Chapter Thirty Five, verses 17-26 Chapter Thirty Six, verses 1-22

That God answers the prayers of the faithful and rewards and punishes men according to His Judgment, which is perfect, is the teaching of Jesus Ben Sira in this section of his book.

Like Jesus Christ in “John”, Jesus Ben Sira prays to God for His Mercy and Justice for the faithful. He asks that God destroy the enemies of the faithful and punish the unbelievers such as the foreign rulers who do not recognize His Sovereignty. He asks that all on earth be brought to the knowledge of Him as the Almighty Eternal Lord.

The Gospel of John Chapter Twelve verses 1-50

Jesus is anointed with expensive oils by a follower named Mary. This symbolizes Jesus’ selection by Wisdom as the true ruler of Israel. It is also a sign of his sacrifice of himself for the salvation of Israel and all mankind. Judas opposes what he sees as a waste of costly oil in keeping with his worldly character.

The chief priests are now plotting against Lazarus which represents the division between the pious Jews and the temple authorities.

A great crowd has gathered to welcome Jesus into Jerusalem as their ruler and the Pharisees are now pressed

to seek some further action to halt the growing popularity of the “Way”.

This action will be the Roman intervention that will serve to outlaw the teachings of Jesus Ben Sira by Roman decree.

Jesus explains that for the children to inherit the father’s estate the father must die. This again shows the sort of backtracking prevalent in “Mark” as this subject was also discussed several chapters ago in “John” and “Wisdom”. Like the seed bearing plant that releases its seed and then dies leaving the seeds to grow and replace it, Jesus teaches that he also, as the bearer of Light, must die so that the faithful may inherit his glory as the children of Light.

References are made to Jesus’ fulfillment of prophecies from the books of prophets like Isaiah and Zecharia.

The influence of the Pharisees in the rejection of Jesus is again emphasized.

Jesus declares that his words are from God. He has come from God to save the world from darkness and sin. God’s Judgment is certain and His Light which is Wisdom, shown in Jesus Ben Sira, is offered so that believers shall inherit Eternal Life as God’s children.

The “Way” referred to themselves in their scrolls as the the Children of Light.

\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\* Chapter Thirty Six, verses 1-31

The prayer of Jesus Ben Sira which is found here is the source of much of chapter 12 in “John”. Here also, references are made to the fulfillment of prophecies and the return of glory and holiness to Jerusalem and the temple.

The identity of Israel as the children of God is

remembered as well as the universal nature of God's mission for Israel as the servants who will lead all mankind to salvation. The "Way" of course believed strongly that Israel was neglecting their sacred duty just as Jesus Ben Sira had taught.

The previous symbol of food, used to represent Truth, and the Truth of Wisdom is changed to a woman whose beauty is the light of man's desire. Her kindness and humility, as displayed in her disciplined speech, are a treasure for her husband that no other can rival. A wife such as this is priceless and a perfect helper and support.

These verses are illustrated by Mary's anointing of Jesus in "John" and the cursed nature of Judas is mirrored by the subsequent verses on the man who has no such wife. He is a fugitive, a robber and a wanderer. Just the kind of labels the "Way" would have used to describe Judas the Galilean and his followers and, sadly, an apt description of many of the Jewish people following their defeat by the Romans.

### The Gospel of John Chapter Thirteen verses 1-57

Chapters 13 through 17 are set at the Last Supper. In chapter 13 Jesus returns to the theme of his role as the servant of the faithful. He symbolizes this role by washing the feet of his followers which also represents the cleansing power of Wisdom on the soul and character of a person. By assuming this humble role, Jesus shows the disciples the proper spirit they should strive for; the spirit of a servant of God and each other and all who show their faithfulness.

The antithesis of the proper spirit is shown in Judas, Jesus' betrayer, and in Simon Peter who will deny Jesus after Jesus is arrested.

The love that Jesus desires the disciples to have for one another is this spirit of sacrifice and loyalty towards one another. For so is God glorified.

The Last Supper in “John” is an example of the kind of private instruction that Jesus was said to provide for his disciples throughout the gospel of Mark. In “Mark” the verses about the Last Supper number less than half of a chapter, while in “John” the Last Supper is given 5 chapters. This difference demonstrates the focus of “John” as a more personal examination of Jesus Ben Sira rather than the slightly more historical, event-driven story of “Mark”.

*\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\* Chapter Thirty Two, Thirty Three, Thirty Four, Chapter Thirty Six, Thirty Seven, verses 1-6*

The subject of service and sacrifice is addressed beginning in chapter 32. The importance of humility is followed by the emphasis on the value of the slave who is bought with blood, symbolizing Wisdom, which if unappreciated and neglected will flee from you and be lost.

This idea is shown in “John” in chapter 13 as Jesus repeats his warning to the unbelievers that he will be gone one day and they will not know where to even begin to look for him.

Jesus Ben Sira’s lesson on the superiority of righteousness over rituals and hypocritical offerings is reflected in “John” by Jesus Christ’s call for love among the faithful. “Wisdom” teaches that God is glorified by the righteous and in turn will glorify them as Jesus teaches in “John”.

The use of the symbol of food for Wisdom by Jesus Ben Sira in this section of his book then corresponds very well with “John” as Jesus Christ spends the next 5 chapters

feeding his disciples spiritual nourishment at the Last Supper.

The Gospel of John

Chapter 14

verses 1-31

Jesus teaches the nature of his relationship with God. Embodying Wisdom, Jesus too cannot be separated from God nor God from him. Those who accept this truth and accept Wisdom, as Jesus, will also become one with the Father. Jesus also tells of the Holy Spirit which will come to them after Jesus has been taken from them. This is the spirit of Truth and Peace.

Thirty Five

\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\* Chapter Thirty Seven,  
verses 7-15

The characterization of Jesus Christ as an advocate or helper is derived from the verses here on choosing the right counselor. A righteous person who serves the Lord is of course most properly sought out for spiritual guidance. However, "Wisdom" teaches that ultimately, one's own heart and mind should guide one most faithfully, as directed by God through prayer. Wisdom is taught to be the Lord's heart and mind. By practicing the teachings of Jesus Ben Sira, faithfulness and prayer, the faithful are changed and become one in heart and mind with God. They are filled with the spirit of Truth, the Holy Spirit spoken of by "John", the Helper that guides the faithful after their "Teacher of Righteousness", Jesus Ben Sira, is no longer among them physically. The use of the term "Holy Spirit"

is found frequently in the Dead Sea Scrolls which makes the connection of the “Way” to the gospels clearer.

The Gospel of John  
Chapter Fifteen

Jesus teaches that he is like a vine. The vine is used as a symbol of Wisdom in “Wisdom”. God is the vine-grower and He must judge the fruitfulness of the vine’s branches, mankind, and determine which must be destroyed and which should be cared for and cultivated. Those who accept Jesus become fruitful branches whose loving service and sacrifice glorify God Who in turn glorifies them. Those who reject Jesus are not fruitful and are separated from the vine, sinners whom God must punish.

The earlier symbol of the slave and the master becomes a friendship as two minds become as one through Wisdom.

\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\* Chapter Thirty Six,  
verses 1-22

Chapter Thirty Seven, verses 16-31

Jesus Ben Sira writes that the mind is the source of all human endeavors, and the mind is ruled by the tongue. But skill in speaking is not necessarily indicative of Wisdom. The test must be the fruits, the effect that words have. The fruits of a wise person’s good sense are the blessings he will bring to to his people through his teachings. His people will praise him and he and his wisdom will be remembered forever.

The symbol of food as Wisdom is repeated in warnings about the necessity of learning what foods are truly good for you and which are bad. Also a warning about gluttony recalls the importance of discipline.



The Gospel of John  
Chapter Sixteen

Jesus tells the disciples of the persecution that will befall them as his followers, even from their own Jewish brethren.

He talks of his death and the pain and sorrow that they will experience when he is gone. However, his death is to become a source of joy for the faithful because of the gift of the Holy Spirit which they will receive and also because they will be made part of God's family by the sacrifice that Jesus will make of himself.

A comparison is made to childbirth and the pain associated with it which turns to joy at the new life which it brings forth.

After Jesus' sacrifice the Father will respond to the prayer of a disciple as if Jesus himself was praying, for they will inherit his special relationship as a child of God.

And so, through the sacrifice of one's worldly nature to the service of the Lord, the son of man is transformed into the Son of God and filled with Wisdom and the Holy Spirit.

"John" has Jesus refer to his use of symbols and figures of speech, so prevalent in the "Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira," as a way to make difficult ideas understandable more gradually so that the disciples would have time to adjust their thinking and not be confronted immediately by thoughts too profound to accept. This is the gradual, progressive course which Wisdom is said to follow in "Wisdom", which tests the patience and perseverance of the faithful.

\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\*

Chapter Thirty Eight Chapter Thirty Nine, verses 1-11

The symbol of Wisdom, or Jesus, as a physician is used again. The faithful will accept the physician as God's servant for healing and to preserve life. The sinner will reject the physician as Jesus has been rejected in "John" and as his disciples will be rejected and persecuted.

Jesus addresses the subject of death and grief. The faithful must not allow grief at the death of a loved one to linger. They should grieve for one or two days then be comforted, for we all must share the same fate one day. Let their memory rest and be at peace for them as they are at peace.

Just as "John" began his Last Supper verses by telling us that Jesus Christ was pondering his approaching death, we find that Jesus Ben Sira is concerned with teaching about death in the verses that "John" was adapting for his gospel.

Jesus Ben Sira details the many roles that men play in the world. The artisans, scribes, potters, farmers, smiths and so forth are important for maintaining the fabric of society. They serve their purpose and are worthy of honor, but they are not sought out as teachers. God chooses another, who dedicates himself to the reading of scripture, who seeks Wisdom in proverbs and parables and in turn, God-willing, instructs those who are hungry for learning as directed by the Lord. He will gain glory and be remembered by his people through all generations and and be praised as a man of Wisdom among all the nations of the world.

## The Gospel of John Chapter Seventeen

Jesus ends the Last Supper with a prayer to God, his Heavenly Father. He asks that God glorify him and recognize the success of his mission. He has found the ones that God chose to receive Wisdom. Through his words, life and sacrifice he has taught them the way to live as God's children. Jesus prays that the faithful be brought into God's family and given the spirit of Truth and a share in the Life of Wisdom which is Eternal.

\*Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira\* Chapter Thirty Nine, verses 12-15 Chapter Fifty One, verses 1-12 Chapter Thirty Nine, verses 16-35 Chapter Forty thru Chapter Fifty

The prayer of Jesus in "John" is taken from the final chapters of "Wisdom". Jesus Ben Sira remarks, like Jesus Christ in chapter 16 of "John", that he has much to say for his mind is filled with Wisdom like the full moon. He begins to pray. In the translation I am using the prayer has been, in my opinion, removed from its original position in the book and added to the end of "Wisdom". It is found as chapter 51, verses 1-12, but it should be inserted after chapter 39, verse 15, where Jesus Ben Sira introduces his prayer of thanksgiving.

In this prayer Jesus Ben Sira thanks the Lord for protecting him from the fires of Hell and for answering his prayer and rescuing him from the evil of sinners. For this Jesus praises the name of the Lord. Chapter 39, verses 16-35, continue with Jesus Ben Sira recounting God's works and the Wisdom in creation which serves God's purpose so perfectly.

Chapter 40 contrasts the worldly who are lost in fear and strife like unhealthy branches which yield no fruit with the faithful who are not of the world but fear the Lord and find Wisdom and are blessed and fruitful.

In chapter 41 he speaks of the death of the ungodly, so bitter, shameful and fruitless. They return to the earth from which they spring and leave an inheritance of disgrace. The faithful leave a good name that will endure forever and a legacy of Wisdom for their children.

He contrasts the sinner's shameful behavior with the behavior of the faithful which one must never be ashamed of.

Again he wonders at God's creation which can never be fully comprehended. Each part has its place and role and to the godly the Lord bestows Wisdom.

Another section of "Wisdom" has been added to the end of the book as chapter 51, verses 13-30. It seems that this section should be placed after chapter 43, verse 33. In these verses Jesus Ben Sira tells of his personal search for Wisdom which God blessed so abundantly.

In chapter 38, verse 21, Jesus Ben Sira speaks of the finality of death which allows no return, but in verse 30 of chapter 51 he again repeats his belief that God will reward the faithful in His own time, which certainly allows for the belief in a resurrection which the "Way" held according to their writings.

Chapters 45 thru 50 contain a remembrance of the great figures and not so great figures of Jewish history found in the Bible and praises the accomplishments of those who had faith in God. The book ends with a short prayer praising God and asking that there be peace in Israel and Jesus Ben Sira's closing encouraging the reader to take to heart what he has read and to put into practice the teachings guided always by the fear of the Lord.

## The Gospel of John

### Chapter Eighteen thru Chapter Twenty One

Following the Last Supper, Jesus leads his disciples into the garden of Gethsemane where Judas brings Jesus' enemies to arrest him.

He is taken to the High Priest, then to Pilate. Jesus defends himself as a teacher sent from the Lord, just as Jesus Ben Sira described himself in "Wisdom". The teacher of Wisdom has been brought before the worldly rulers to testify to the Truth as Jesus Ben Sira prophesied and is rejected just as is written in "Wisdom" as well.

The details which gave historical significance to the crucifixion in "Mark" are noticeably absent from "John". The focus of "John" is on the horrors of the executions of the pious Hasidim by the Syrians following Jesus' defeat and exile in the time of the laws against Judaism and the tragedy of the rejection of "Wisdom" and Jesus Ben Sira in the first century by the Jewish authorities which lead to the Romans outlawing "Wisdom" and joining with the temple officials to persecute the "Way".

It was this persecution which would have caused the "Way" to conceal their library in the caves near Qumran. The destruction of the scrolls by the Romans then gave rise to the rewriting of "Wisdom" as the gospels of Mark and John, the symbolic resurrection of Jesus Ben Sira.

Jesus Christ appears to Mary and then to the disciples and bestows peace and the Holy Spirit upon them. Mary confuses Jesus with a gardener. This is symbolic of the vine of Wisdom and relates to the symbols that Jesus Ben Sira used to describe himself such as the one who waters his garden and the one who gathers grapes. In such a trying time

as the “Way” was facing a little light humor would have no doubt been much appreciated.

Symbolically, Eternal Wisdom, manifested in God’s Son, Jesus Ben Sira and the “Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira”. cannot be destroyed, but only ignored or concealed for awhile, always destined to be resurrected and revealed again according to God’s will and in His own time.

I think that Chapter 21 of “John” is an addition made some years after the gospel was originally completed and so it is not included in my look at the gospel which should end with the stated intention of “John”; that is, to show why Jesus is the Messiah and should be accepted and believed in by the “Way” and all of the faithful despite the opposition of those in authority.

## Part Three

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## Conclusion

It is important to repeat that most of the ideas that I have presented here are, to my knowledge, not supported or advanced by biblical scholars or writers. Rather than repeatedly qualify my statements with phrases like “I think” or “it seems to me”, etc., I have chosen to give notice in advance, and now again in summation, that the interpretations of historical events and the comparative readings of scriptural and nonscriptural sources in particular are largely my own.

To those who have great expertise in this area of study I’m sure that my presentation constitutes a simplistic view of what is without question a most complicated and difficult subject. On the other hand, a fresh view from a less involved observer is often beneficial and for those whose interest in this area is more personal and less professional perhaps this examination will help to eliminate some of the confusion that has made this field of study at once so fascinating and frustrating.

In the interest of providing an even more succinct, though to many, probably an even more simplistic explanation of the work and writings of the “Way” to which I have added the gospels of Mark and John; I want to summarize the course of events which led to the emergence of the sect, their persecution and then their transformation into the new religion of Christianity.

The Bible tells us that the people of Israel reached a point of crisis around the year 1000 B.C.E. when the nation felt compelled to unite under a single ruler in order to preserve

their identity in the face of strong pressure from neighboring peoples who were intent on subjugating Israel militarily. Saul, the first Jewish king, proved incapable of coping with the many problems of governing a people whose ultimate ruler must always be the Lord. We are told that David was chosen by God to replace him.

At this same time the Lord also chose a new priest, again a man more acceptable to the Lord than those then presiding, named Zadok. The “Way” wrote of their “Teacher of Righteousness” in language that was very similar to the description of Zadok that we find in the book of Samuel. The teacher was also said to have been raised up by the Lord in response to the need in Israel for one more faithful and closer to God in heart and mind. The “Way” also frequently referred to themselves as the “Sons of Zadok” in their scrolls.

The obvious problem that Israel faced in relation to the nations that threatened her we find illustrated by the biblical story of “David and Goliath”. Israel was small in comparison to those who would conquer her and needed God’s help if she were to survive. A brief look at the Israel of today, some three thousand years after Saul and David, finds the situation little changed. Israel is still quite small and surrounded by enemies as we know.

The end to Israel’s first monarchy came in the year 587 B.C.E. when they were conquered by the Babylonian Empire. This definitive event was used by the “Way” to pinpoint the date of their beginning, which was some 390 years later in the year 197 B.C.E.

The Bible recounts the many wise men, or prophets, who lived before the Babylonian conquest and who tried to convince the people, and especially the rulers, of Israel that God’s purpose for Israel was not being fulfilled by the nation.

Isaiah, one such prophet, taught that Israel was forgetting her higher calling. The nation was to be a holy people who would bring Wisdom to mankind and guide the nations of the earth to the way of peaceful coexistence as the Lord intended for his children. The leaders of Israel chose to ignore the wise teachers, however, and God had turned his back on the Jews and left them to the designs of men.

The rebirth of the nation came some 50 years later in the year 538 B.C.E. when those who had been taken captive into Babylon returned to the promised land. The mistake of modeling the nation of the people of God on the surrounding worldly states was corrected in the new Israel. Instead of a monarchy this time Israel made the descendants of the faithful priest Zadok her rulers.

The succession of high priests, as the new rulers were called, remained unbroken until the reign of Simon the Just in 220 B.C.E.. Israel existed at this time within an empire ruled by an Egyptian dynasty by the name of Ptolemy. The Ptolemy dynasty respected the holy aspirations of the Jews and not only allowed them to maintain their separate identity but even made large contributions to their temple in Jerusalem. Simon was widely known as a good man and a wise ruler who was close to the heart and mind of God.

The Ptolemys lost their control of Israel in 198 B.C.E. when they were defeated in battle by a Syrian remnant of the Greek Empire of Alexander the Great known as the Seleucid dynasty. The Seleucids were outwardly accepting of the same sort of relationship with Israel that the Ptolemys had built. However, their initial tolerance was short-lived if it indeed had ever really been genuine. Under mysterious circumstances, Simon the Just died suddenly in 197 B.C.E. likely the victim of Syrian intrigue.

As stated earlier, the “Way” mark this year as the date of

their being called out by the Lord to form their sect, a remnant of faithful Jews whose mission it was to preserve the highest purpose of Judaism. As the “Sons of Zadok” it would follow that the suspicious death of their beloved leader, a son of Zadok, would cause them to react in this way.

The Seleucids began to pressure the Jews to give up their Jewish ways and melt into the Greek, or Hellenic, world as all the surrounding peoples had done. With the loss of such a strong and influential leader as Simon, individual Jews were increasingly unable to withstand the pressures to hellenize. Simon’s son, Onias III, became high priest in 188 B.C.E. and was able to stem the tide of hellenization to some extent. He also enjoyed a fine reputation like his father and like his father he met a similarly suspicious end most likely at the hands of the Syrians. Onias III’s sudden death in 175 B.C.E. brought another of Simon’s sons to the high priesthood. His name was Jesus.

Isaiah’s prophecy of the transformation of the world through Israel was to be fulfilled by a single individual, the Messiah, who was to be born of the Jewish people. The Messiah would bring God’s Light, His Wisdom, to mankind. He would possess the Wisdom by which God created and maintains the universe. Since God cannot be separated from His Wisdom, the Messiah would be God come to earth in human form, the true Child of God, the Word of God as written in the Holy Scriptures.

The “Way” believed that Jesus, this son of Simon, known also as Jason and Jesus Ben Sira, was the long awaited Messiah of Israel. And so began the struggle that culminated in the writing of the gospels of Mark and John in the first century and the birth of Christianity.

Again, consider the nightmare which the “Way” found themselves in during the gospel era:

- Their Messiah, the “Teacher of Righteousness”, “Son of Zadok”, Jesus Ben Sira, was widely remembered, mainly from the lies and propaganda of the Pharisees and Jewish authorities, as a violent, power-hungry scoundrel named Jason.
- The book that they revered as the sacred Word, written by the “Son of God,” again Jesus Ben Sira, was unlawful to teach from or disseminate.
- Their lay members had been disenfranchised as Jews and were no longer permitted in the synagogues.
- Members of the “Way” were being harassed and persecuted by both the Roman and the Jewish authorities; persecution which included torture and execution.
- The Jewish war against the Romans was beginning and the “Way” had been targeted as a particularly subversive faction.
- Acting on a tip from an informer, the Roman authorities had attacked the home of the “Way” and destroyed the priceless collection of sacred scrolls which had been carefully sealed in caves for safe-keeping.

The “Way” believed that they were the faithful remnant of Jews who were called by God to fulfill the mission which all other Jews had forsaken. They would bring the peaceful, glorious “Kingdom of God” to earth. Through Wisdom, as found in Jesus Ben Sira, all mankind would learn to live in harmony according to God’s will as reflected in the Ten Commandments.

The “Way” believed that the Roman Empire, impressive and seemingly indestructible though it appeared, was of the earth and would eventually return to the earth, while they

were from above, children of the Eternal Creator of the universe and their Father's kingdom could never end for it was Life itself.

Josephus cites the devotion of the Essenes, meaning the "Way", to their books which, he wrote, they defended with their lives. Since the Dead Sea Scroll caves were very well hidden and located well away from the buildings at Qumran, it must be concluded that the Roman raid had been planned from the start to be directed at the sect's scrolls and that someone had informed the Romans of the library's location.

Were the Roman soldiers to have been simply marching along the Dead Sea attacking Jewish outposts they certainly would never have just happened upon the caves and decided to destroy the books.

The response of the "Way" to this final straw was to attempt under the most trying, dangerous and distressing circumstances, to keep their cause alive. They could reasonably fear that very few of their number were going to survive this turmoil and the war for Jewish independence with its additional potential for destruction and loss of life. Their Master's book was extant in both Hebrew and Greek translations and might survive for a time. But who would know its significance or really be capable of understanding it without the "Way" there to guide students through its subtleties and layers of meaning?

Throughout the gospels it is said that Jesus' private instruction was essential for the disciples' understanding of his teachings. An unbroken chain of teachers reaching back to men who knew Jesus personally would have given the "Way" invaluable and unique insight into "Wisdom".

If we observe the position "Wisdom" holds today in our own time, disregarded almost universally as it is as a strange curiosity even by the Roman Catholic Church which

includes it in their canon of sacred scriptures on a par with all of the most accepted books of the Bible; we can likely see the way the book was regarded in the first century by and large.

It was allowed to survive but was not permitted in the synagogues and had been officially branded a bad influence, dangerous, a stumbling block for Jews. Eventually the book was banned and then officially excluded from the Jewish canon.

The “Way” document all of these elements in “Mark” and “John”. These works were written so that the legacy of their Messiah, Jesus Ben Sira, might survive that dark age of trouble. So that the teachings of Jesus would survive in the most complete and profound understanding of them that the “Way” possessed. First, for the continued instruction of their surviving members, but also for all those who might feel called to live according to the will of God, as Jesus himself had hoped. By placing “Mark” and “John” in their proper context they are able to be appreciated even more.

Very specific criticisms of Jesus and the “Way” are addressed in the gospels perhaps to provide the members with answers to accusations that might be leveled at them.

For instance, we know that the official Hasmonean version of the “Teacher of Righteousness”, Jesus, as found in the book of Maccabees, describes his violent nature, a man who brutally gospels Jesus’ followers briefly engage their enemy in the confrontation in the garden and then Jesus quickly stops the fighting and accepts his fate.

The Pharisees criticized the appeal of Jesus to sinners and gentiles. In the gospels, Jesus asserts that his mission is to bring Wisdom, God’s Judgment, to those who are lost.

When Jesus arrives to find Lazarus already deceased, his family tells Jesus that Lazarus would not have died if

Jesus had been there. Since the forced hellenization of the Seleucid period which followed Jesus' exile is being recalled by this story, the point is made that if Jesus had been allowed to retain the high priesthood then the suffering and deaths would not have occurred.

The "Way" spoke of the Seleucid persecution of pious Jews in their scrolls when they wrote of the sacrifice of the faithful as atonement for the sins of the unfaithful. They tell of their willingness to accept this role which is represented by the crucifixion of Jesus in the gospels. Since they were one in mind and spirit with the Messiah, in the gospels, it is the Messiah who is being crucified.

To the Pharisees, Jesus was a worldly man. It is true that Jesus Ben Sira writes of the pleasure found in friendship, marriage, children, laughter, wine, good food, music and beauty. He tells the faithful to feel free to enjoy these pleasures in moderation. But the final word is always that Wisdom is the greatest joy and that which the faithful must pursue above all else. For all of the other things are only meant to make man long for the ultimate satisfaction to which they hint. The joy of knowing the Lord.

The point has been made that the scrolls found near Qumran indicate that the "Way" anticipated the arrival of not one single Messiah, but three distinct messiahs. They speak of a kingly messiah, the heir of David, a priestly messiah, the heir of Aaron, and a healing, teaching messiah, a prophet like Moses. "Mark" and "John" clearly demonstrate how Jesus Ben Sira fulfills all three roles and reveal the Messiah of Israel to be Wisdom, incarnated as Jesus Ben Sira.

The early writings of Christianity pay homage in particular to Paul. He is given much credit for extending the faith to gentile believers. Considering the true story of the gospels it is difficult to know who did or didn't actually



exist by name at that time. However, a man or men like Paul surely did journey around the empire preaching and teaching in the manner of John the Baptist and meet with good success in gaining converts to the “Way”.

The book, the “Acts of the Apostles”, appears to be very credible with its description of the core, Jerusalem-based, Jewish “Way” attempting to survive against strong opposition from the authorities while Paul, with a great sense of urgency, traveled the area between Judea and Rome trying to spread the new Faith in Jesus Christ. ☺

The “Acts of the Apostles” also contains what may be a clue as to the direction Christianity took in the centuries that followed until the decree of Emperor Constantine which made Christianity the official state religion of the Roman Empire in the Fourth Century.

A disciple named John Mark is introduced in “Acts” as an early, well respected, Jewish member of the sect then still known as the “Way”. Tradition has been handed down that this disciple actually wrote the gospel of Mark. We see in “Acts” that this disciple, who must have been quite a remarkable man if he is to be credited with writing such a work as “Mark”, did not meet with the approval of Paul. In fact, Paul accuses John Mark of simply running off and leaving him in a place called Pamphylia.

The inclusion of these details in “Acts” seems strange when compared with the previous complimentary description of the disciple and his other stunning accomplishment.

If we consider the mission that Paul had undertaken of bringing the gospel to the gentiles along with the coded and symbolic nature of the writings of the gospel era, a deception necessitated by the situation the “Way” was in at this time, so besieged by enemies, a possible explanation emerges.

If “John Mark” was the code name used for the gospels of Mark and John it would make sense that Paul, who was concerned primarily with non-Jewish converts, would find these books too filled with symbols and historical references written for the Jewish members of the “Way”. Paul might have rejected the books for his purposes as being too confusing for gentiles and declined to use them on his mission journeys.

This could also be an event that explains the subsequent disassociation of the gospels from their source, the book, the “Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira”, and their connection to the Zadokite high priesthood.

At the end of the First Century, two Christian writers, Iraeneus and Clement, both hint strongly at, though owing to the still tumultuous conditions, never openly refer to the role of Jesus Ben Sira in Christianity. They do, however, make the identical statement later made by Augustine in the Fourth Century that Wisdom is God. The original Jewish members of the “Way” who were instructed according to the methods handed down from the inception of the sect and well-versed in Judaism would understand how God, Wisdom and Jesus are one.

The gentiles whom Paul was preaching to would more likely lack the background of the Jewish members, however, and would not be able to grasp the more complex theological concepts like those found in “Mark” and “John”.

In his first epistle to the Corinthians Paul addresses the topic of Wisdom for a Greek audience which would have been familiar with the Greek goddess of wisdom, Athena. Paul tries very hard to make clear to these Greek converts the difference between man’s wisdom, presumably found in the Greek myths, and God’s Wisdom which is revealed in Jesus Christ. This shows the concern that Paul had that

confusion among the gentiles would result from their being exposed to complex ideas without the requisite background in Jewish theology and scriptures.

He finishes his discussion of Wisdom by declaring that Jesus Christ is the Wisdom of God. Thus he was in complete agreement with the Jerusalem "Way" theologically, but concerned about the perceptions that new gentile converts might have. He also chooses to write of God as the only source of Wisdom rather than use the language of the other early church writers who simply state that God is Wisdom.

However, by the time of Jerome and Augustine, in the Fourth Century, the Church was prepared to discard the so-called apochryphal books, including the "Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira". What had happened?

One explanation is that by the time of the scriptural translation into Latin which Jerome and Augustine were assigned to accomplish, the number of Jewish Christians had fallen to essentially zero!

What remained of the original traditions of the "Way" was mostly the heirarchical structure of the priestly scholars and leadership guiding and governing a, by this time, very large and well distributed lay membership.

If we assume that the views of Paul which I previously outlined were accepted by the later Church leaders, and consider the many references found in the gospels as well as the Dead Sea Scrolls that new aspirants to membership in the sect were initially given teachings that were considered easier to grasp and then were gradually brought along to a more profound understanding of the Faith; then it follows that the great expansion of the Church in such a relatively short time, coupled with a tradition of secrecy and guardedness that had evolved from decades, even centuries of persecution, created a situation where the Church became progressively

less knowledgeable from the top administrators to the lowest rungs of the general membership.

Ultimately, the inner circle of truly informed members would have grown progressively smaller until eventually, by the time of the Latin Vulgate translation, the Church council which oversaw the project could very easily have been composed of a sufficiently large percentage of less knowledgeable Christians that such a mistake as rejecting the most essential book the “Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira” on the same grounds cited by the Jewish authorities would have been an entirely innocent one.

As I advanced earlier, Augustine’s writings leave little doubt that he knew the true importance of Jesus Ben Sira. He demonstrated his devotion to “Wisdom” by his bold confrontation with the Church council and his insistence that the book be included in the Latin Vulgate translation of the Bible.

He was though, apparently unwilling to make his motivations completely public as he still maintained some veil of secrecy in his translations and did accept the council’s final decision that the apochryphal books, including “Wisdom”, be added to the Bible without full canonical status. They were labeled “deutero-canonical”. That is, considered of value but not the indisputably inspired Word of God.

Augustine’s efforts then were within the spirit of the inner circle of higher knowledge. He maintained this protocol while at the same time providing access to the apochryphal books to the general membership in the spirit of the original stated goal of the council which was to make the Bible accessible to Christians in the more common tongue.

Another goal, officially noted by the council, was to

save the questionable books, including “Wisdom” from being lost.

A curious coincidence is that the Hebrew translation of Jesus’ book was actually lost to history at exactly this time. We can only speculate on the possible connection of this disappearance to the events we have just recounted. Augustine reportedly used both the Greek and Hebrew editions of “Wisdom” for his Latin translation.

Moving ahead to the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century we again find the apochryphal books at the center of controversy. The same situation as occurred with the earlier Church council and the Latin translations arose during this later time when the Bible was again being translated into other so- called common tongues.

This time the apochryphal books, including “Wisdom”, were excluded from the new translations amid the same criticism that the Church council of the Fourth Century had leveled; that the books had been disavowed by the Jewish authorities who questioned their origins and spiritual value.

One reformer, Martin Luther, did include these books in his earliest German translation, but then removed them from later editions. The conflict that he must have felt was revealed in his alternately calling the works absolutely essential for understanding Christianity’s origins, then scurrilous and untrustworthy, and finally of great value but not as reliable as the unquestionably divinely inspired texts. This last stance was very close to the official Roman Catholic opinion.

The first editions of the King James Bible also contained the apochryphal books but then they were excluded later as well due mostly to political bickering that arose when the Catholic English king passed a law providing stiff penalties

for anyone found manufacturing or distributing bibles without the controversial works included.

So the seed of true Judaism which the “Way” believed that they possessed and had protected with their lives did most certainly outlive the Roman Empire. And Jesus Ben Sira had prophesied that his words would endure through all generations and they have.

In the 1890’s, following the discovery of some of the sectarian writings of the original “Way” in an old synagogue, a copy of “Jesus Ben Sira’s Wisdom” in its original Hebrew resurfaced among a cache of ancient documents found in another very old synagogue as it was being demolished.

These discoveries were postulated to have been preserved simply as interesting antiquities by their Jewish keepers and not to have held any religious significance for them. However, mere speculation compels us to wonder if the “Way” actually did retain a remnant of members within the Jewish religion in secret throughout the centuries that followed their separation in the First Century and whether some remnant might survive to this day.

Finally, the tragic events of our own time during the Nazi era must be considered. Much less speculation is needed to uncover the truth of these events. Eyewitnesses still live among us. Thousands of volumes document the unthinkable horrors of the Jewish holocaust. We have photographs and films which preserve the facts. Films even show the burning of unacceptable books all engineered by an eerily Roman-like empire-building anti-Semite with a satanic lust for power and world domination. Sadly, as history again repeated itself the persecution of Jews was again central to the remarkable discovery and opening of the very same caves along the Dead Sea where the remains of the precious scrolls of the “Way” still lay buried.

Jesus Christ, repeating his teachings from “Wisdom”, told his disciples to expect his return when the tree of earth’s worldly passions was in full bloom. When all the world exploded in war not long ago the branches of the tree of worldly passions could not have been fuller since the world began. And Wisdom could not have been any more necessary. For the “Way”, Wisdom and the name Jesus Ben Sira were synonymous with the word Peace. His likely residence and place of refuge at Qumran was a fitting place then for the attention of the world to be drawn following World War II in 1947.

Needless to say, without the terrors of this century there might never have been the discoveries of the Dead Sea Scrolls; just as the terrors of the First Century led to their burial.

Nearly as remarkable, however, is that the mind of another Jewish wise man, Albert Einstein, produced the theories which led to the brightest flash of light ever produced on earth, a by-product of the awesome weapon that helped end the terrible conflict, the atomic bomb. Theories that Einstein himself said resulted from a search for the mind of God.

We live on a violent planet in a dangerous and unforgiving universe. Quite understandably, mankind has had to aggressively combat the forces of nature to survive. Unfortunately, too often we have turned that most necessary aggression against each other most unnecessarily. Jesus Ben Sira wrote that the torments of nature were created by God to discipline sinners and teach mankind the need for Wisdom. He also wrote that God is merciful and freely offers His Wisdom through which we have the power to overcome the world and live in peace and harmony.

Wisdom, Jesus wrote, is difficult and requires discipline, humility, personal sacrifice and most of all a fear, respect, of

our Creator. Jesus believed, as Isaiah before him, that the day would come when mankind would take the first step towards true peace by conquering the worldly passions within us all which mirror the volatile natural forces and too threaten to destroy us. His disciples, the “Way”, accepted the most gruesome tortures and death smilingly rather than surrender that hope and forsake their holy books. They accepted their fate, we are told, with the unshakable confidence that they would be rewarded for their faithful service in God’s own time and way as Jesus Ben Sira had taught them.

My own hope is that my little book will also serve that cause in some small way. Life or death, each must choose.

#### Source Texts

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# Yeshua or Jesus -

## does it make a difference?

By Harry C. Marschner

My new assignment instructed me to drive to a small town in Northern Florida called Alachua. I was to go to a drop lot and pick up a loaded trailer that lovely sunny day and deliver it some few hundred miles away to a store. It was a typical load for a long-distance truck driver. However, this assignment brought with it another assignment of a different nature – from the Lord!

For several weeks prior to this day I had been working on a project that was quite engrossing. I was taking the verses from the Biblical book which is known as “The Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira” as found in the “New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apochrypha” and setting the material to music. It was the kind of work that I enjoyed very much.

It brought me to a spiritual place that put my mind on my faith, my relationship with my Heavenly Father and the lessons that Jesus was imparting with his writings.

I called it “Musar.. the songs of Jesus of the second century B.C., Jerusalem”. I strove to be as authentic as possible with the melodies I chose. I yearned to some how do justice to the beautiful language in the book. All of the songs would be word for word as found in the English translation of the NOAB. I was referencing the Hebrew music that I was familiar with to give the songs a kind of Hebraic

character that would preserve the spirit of the poetry Jesus had written.

One exciting prospect for me was that when the project was completed I would be able to recall the verses through singing the material. I had read that this very purpose was one of the reasons why the books of that time were often written in poetry. Those interested in the literature would be better able to memorize them as poetry. In this way a book could be borrowed for the time needed to submit it to memory and then passed along. It is said that many Hebrews of this era could recite their entire Holy Scriptures from memory.

The NOAB was perfectly composed to enable this project. For the first time, the books in this bible appeared exactly as they were shown in the most ancient sources available. The verses were arranged and spaced to exhibit the original paragraphs and lines precisely. For the writings of Jesus this revealed a wonderfully artistic, even modern, style of poetry. This translation also utilized the most authentic editions of the book including a Hebrew edition that was believed to be a copy of the original Hebrew as Jesus wrote it.

I had also read that poems of that time were sometimes referred to as songs and now songs they would be.

When the assignment to travel to Alachua appeared on my truck communicator it reminded me of the Lord's Hebrew name of Yeshua - most likely because of Musar. It wasn't often that I thought of the name Yeshua.

I had learned of the name Yeshua about 35 years earlier when I decided to do research into the more historical side of Jesus. There was a small book that had been self-published by a wealthy Jewish businessman in the 1940's in our local public library. He wrote that he was recently retired and had decided to share some of his thoughts on Christianity and Jesus from the Jewish perspective.

The ideas, he said were taken in large part from discussions he had listened to as a boy when his aunts and uncles and family members were gathered together. He recalled that the topic of Jesus came up regularly in their discussions.

One conversation was on the very name of Jesus. It was common knowledge, his relatives had said, that the word Jesus was a 17<sup>th</sup> century invention of a British professor. How then, could Christians profess such devotion to a name that simply was not the real name of their Savior? They tried to be charitable, but this talk of the power of the name of Jesus was really kind of comical they had declared.

At that time, a bit of reading on my part did in fact confirm what the Jewish businessman had published vis-a-vis the Lord's name. It was at the University of Cambridge, I believe, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century that a British professor created the name of Jesus. At first, this news was disturbing to me; but I decided that, surely, most anyone who cared about such things was aware of this and it was really of no importance.

Jesus knows who he is. God knows who Christians mean when they pray in his name

If it did matter, someone would have remedied the problem by now. He has been Jesus for centuries, after all.

But now, my project of Musar returned to my thoughts and my desire for authenticity. Shouldn't my project be called "Musar... the songs of Yeshua of the second century B.C., Jerusalem"? That would be in keeping with the proper Hebraic character that I was hoping for.

I love to pray. As Alachua neared on that bright sunny Florida spring morning I asked God, "Should I use the name Yeshua for my project?" "Does it matter?" "Could He let me know?"

The answer to my prayer came and it astounded me!

Let me share it with you. Though you may find the story trivial and unimportant, please bear with me for a little while.

On to Alachua I drove to pick up the load. On to the store to deliver their merchandise. On to more assignments. More trailers. More miles of highway and countryside.

Some time had passed since I had prayed. One day as I traversed the good old USA my mind returned to my dilemma. My thought was "Get thee behind me, Satan", followed by "This verse equals 'shoo' as in 'go away' or 'be gone' as in the second syllable of the name Yeshua when spoken".

Well, not being an ancient Hebrew, I can't claim excellence in the skill of memorization. I must admit that, though I definitely recognized the verse from the gospels, it came to me as occurring in the gospels when Jesus is driven into the wilderness and is being tempted; as is recounted near the beginning of the gospel of Mark. I made a mental note to refer to my bible when my current trip was over and I was back home.

Something told me that this was my answer from God, though, and I thanked Him. I also love to thank God. Conclusion, it does matter if you use Yeshua or Jesus.

You know, I saw a silent film once that had dual French and English title cards. It was fun to test my high school French as I compared the words in each of the languages. The French word "grace" corresponded to "gratitude" in English.

More assignments. More loads. More highways and more miles.

Arriving home, at last, it wasn't long before my copy of the NOAB was opened and I anxiously turned to the gospel of Mark to discover what the Lord had been referring to. The verse "Get thee behind me, satan" was not there in the account of the temptation in the wilderness. It was humbling to realize my mistake.

Quickly, I used the internet to cut straight to the chase and find out where the verse could actually be found. It was said by Jesus to Peter when he questioned why Jesus must be rejected and die.

A bit stubbornly, perhaps, I turned back to Jesus's temptation in the wilderness near the beginning of the gospel. This still seemed to me like the place where I should for the Lord's answer to my prayer.

This is what I saw on page 1214 of the NOAB in the gospel of Mark:

Chapter 1 verse 12

The Spirit immediately drove  
him out into the wilderness. 13 And  
he was in the wilderness forty days, = shoo  
tempted by Satan; and was with the  
wild beasts, and the angels ministered  
to him.

14 Now when John was arrested,  
Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the  
gospel of God, 15 and saying, "The = ah  
time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of  
God is at hand; repent, and believe  
in the gospel."

The 6 lines followed by 6 lines seemed like a pattern to me.

If "Get thee behind me, satan" equals "shoo" as in "Go away" or "Be gone" as in the second syllable of the name Yeshua, could not verse 12 thru 13 equal "shoo" also, was my thought.

And if the 6 lines of verses 12 thru 13 combine to mean "shoo", then shouldn't the next 6 lines combine to mean something. Couldn't they mean "ah" as in opening

one's mouth to witness as in the third syllable of the name Yeshua

Assuming the two sets of 6 lines were grouped intentionally, and assuming they are shown in the NOAB as they appear in the most authentic source known for this gospel, there must be some reason for the grouping and this must be the reason. They constitute a pattern or code for Jesus's Hebrew name.

I referred back to the previous paragraph which is the 9 lines of verses 9 thru 11.

### Mark Chapter 1

9 In those days Jesus came from  
Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized  
by John in the Jordan. 10 And when  
he came up out of the water, immediately  
he saw the heavens opened and = yes  
the Spirit descending upon him like a  
dove, 11 and a voice came from  
heaven, "Thou art my beloved Son;  
with thee I am well pleased."

If the two groups of lines that follow verses 9 thru 11 combine to mean "shoo" "ah" then this group of 9 lines must combine to mean "yes" as in assenting to God's authority by being baptized and meeting God's approval as in the first syllable of the name Yeshua.

At this point my thoughts turned to the author of The Wisdom of Jesus ben Sira who is also known as Jesus ben Simon. In my book *A Way In The Wilderness* I theorize that it is he who is written of as Jesus Christ in the gospels. When I wrote that book a kind of code or pattern in the gospels was revealed which entailed placing a word or phrase in the gospel in position so that it would correspond with the exact same phrase or word as it appeared in Jesus Ben Simon's book. This pattern was found in both the gospels of Mark and John. My thought on this was that it must have been done to help a reader keep the proper part of Jesus ben Simon's book in mind while reading the gospels, since, as I show in my book, the gospels of Mark and John are actually re-workings of the first half and then second half of The Wisdom of Jesus Ben Simon (Sira) respectively.

And, there in the next paragraph of Mark was a word that followed so perfectly that it had to be there as a form of the code I'd had uncovered for my book. There was the name Simon.

Now we have uncovered the name Yeshua Simon encoded in the beginning of the Gospel of Mark.

At this point, let's remember that this code can not be discerned in any other translation of the Hebrew scriptures or the New Testament that I am aware of.

Therefore, the question of the validity of these patterns is called into doubt.

Since they are unique to this translation they can't be compared to any other bible to verify that they are authentic. The scholars that prepared the NOAB could have intentionally created them, so let's look at that possibility first.

My first answer to a possible deliberate fabrication of these codes by the creators of the NOAB is the impeccable credentials of the men involved. Would they risk ridicule and



possible disgrace to perpetrate such a hoax? What would be gained versus what they would have risked? It's possible that they were playing with people here, but not even remotely reasonable.

Another point is the authenticity they labored so hard to achieve.

Why would they have been so meticulous in their work, only to then play a joke?

The uniqueness of this translation is claimed very prominently in the introduction to the work. It is said to be the first modern translation to utilize material found in the Dead Sea Scrolls. The first to use a Hebrew edition of the Wisdom of Jesus Ben Simon. The first to arrange the actual lines of print as they appeared in the most authentic sources as regards paragraphs and grouping of lines. Would serious scholars of this stature loudly proclaim how unique and authentic their efforts were if they planned to put things in their work that would be easy to refute as simply products of their imagination? They would have known that no other English bible translation could be used to compare them to. They must have believed that their arrangement of the lines was the way they were supposed to appear.

When I was examining the two gospels in great detail for my book, I was puzzled by the first two chapters of Mark as I admitted in my book. My only attempt at an explanation for why they didn't seem to correspond to Jesus ben Simon's book as precisely as other sections was that it was some of kind of a message or teaching meant to be understood by the readers of that era in some historical context. I propose that the creators of the NOAB were so focused on their very important task that they honestly didn't notice that the patterns I found were there.

After all, it is supposed to be hidden from all but the members of the sect.

The sect was the Essenes in my opinion. Contemporary accounts speak of the awful pressure the Essenes were under at the time the gospels were written. They were being persecuted cruelly by both the Jewish and Roman authorities. We are told that their books were the source of contention.

The power of the written word was greatly feared in their time just as it is today.

The writers of Mark and John needed to be very creative if they were going to avoid placing themselves or a reader of their books in jeopardy. It is said that the worst of times produce the best of art.

I see the cleverness of these codes as being examples of a high level of art, indeed!

Now, let's continue to decode the gospel of Mark - perhaps for the first time in centuries!

The next paragraph contains the phrase "The holy one of God".

Now we have Yeshua Simon, The holy one of God. I would think we are to read this as Yeshua Simon, the Messiah.

Backtracking for a moment, the paragraph before verse 9 contains the phrase the Holy Spirit. Now we have The Holy Spirit of Yeshua Simon the Messiah. I would read this as "The Wisdom of Yeshua Simon, the Messiah".

As my book explains: The books of Mark and John are taken directly, at times verbatim, from the Wisdom of Yeshua ben Simon aka Sira and what we are now seeing, to me, would be the title page of Yeshua's book in code. Next, I will address the question I posed to myself upon first considering what we are discussing.

For this to be possible the words "yes" "shoo" and "ah"

would have to be found in the language of the Jews of first century Judea. The Essenes would have used hebrew or aramaic, its very close relative, in that era in Judea, it is said, as their everyday language.

To begin this exercise, first the word “shoo” is not, at least officially a hebrew word. But the second syllable of the name Yeshua is really the easiest to verify since the hebrews would have been using the hebrew word “shua” which is translated as “help” or “save”. The translation works perfectly for this theory. While Jesus does resist temptation, he is said to have been ministered to by angels in the verses 12-13 of the second paragraph of the code. Minister is certainly another word for help or save.

The second syllable passes the test without any doubt at all. This paragraph could have been used to call to mind the second syllable of the name Yeshua - “shua” - in the first century in Judea

The first paragraph of the pattern is also actually, pretty easy as well. Like “shoo” the word “yes” did not appear to be used in Judea at that time. However, the hebrew word “yah”, according to most scholars, was spoken at that time to convey affirmation. It is also a word the hebrews used for God, so it is said that the word would be used when the situation called for an emphatic affirmation, perhaps expressing something like “absolutely”! Many writers are of the opinion that the common usage of “yah” would have been to shorten it to a simple “y” spoken with the sound found for y in the word yes. Others believe that it would have been spoken as “yea” as well. At any rate, the first syllable of Yeshua is also easy to extract from the passage proposed for that purpose.

That leaves the last syllable, “ah”, and everything I found about “ah” is that “ah” is “ah” in any language. The

hebrews definitely used “ah” to indicate speaking, or as one writer elaborated, “the opening of one’s mouth”.

So, to summarize, they wouldn’t have been hinting at “shoo” or “yes” by creating their descriptive scenarios, but it would have been more likely the words “yah” “shua” “ah”. These three words then combine to arrive at Yeshua per the proposed code formula.

So the “title page” interpretation is a possible one in regards to first century language in Judea.

Among the Dead Sea Scrolls writings is a view of the Messiah that is believed to be one unique to the sect that created them - most likely the Essenes. They wrote of waiting for not a single Messiah, but three Messiahs. I propose that the three Messiahs was more likely a teaching that the Messiah would be fulfilling three roles or duties.

The three roles comprise the duties of a prophet, a priest and a king or ruler.

We now address the three Messiah teaching.

Following the paragraph made up of verses 21 - 27 which refer to the “holy one of God” or Messiah, there is a second set of three paragraphs again encoding the name of Yeshua.

The first paragraph of this set is the 3 lines of verse 28.

And at once his fame spread

everywhere throughout all the sur- = yea or yah  
rounding region of Galilee.

This is another scene of affirmation as in “yah” or “yea” as in the first syllable of Yeshua.

The second paragraph of the set is the 9 lines of verses  
29 - 31

29 And immediately he left the  
synagogue, and entered the house of  
Simon and Andrew, with James and  
John. 30 Now Simon's mother-in-law = shua  
lay sick with a fever, and immediately  
they told him of her. 31 And he came  
and took her by the hand and lifted  
her up, and the fever left her; and she  
served them.

This is a scene depicting help or saving as in the word  
“shua” as in the second syllable of Yeshua.

The third paragraph of this set is the 9 lines of verses  
32 – 34

32 That evening, at sundown,  
they brought to him all who were sick or  
possessed with demons. 33 And the  
whole city was gathered together about = ah  
the door. 34 And he healed many who ☉  
were sick with various diseases, and  
cast out many demons; and he would  
not permit the demons to speak, be-  
cause they knew him.

This scene is a warning about “opening ones mouth” as  
in “ah” as in the third syllable of the name Yeshua.

We have then, the three syllables of Yeshua repeated just  
as in the first set of three paragraphs.

First set of 3 paragraphs were made up of 9 lines + 6  
lines + 6 lines = 21 lines.

Second set of 3 paragraphs are made up of 3 lines + 9  
lines + 9 lines = 21 lines.

It is known that the hebrew language assigns number  
values to the letters of its alphabet and we will consider the  
possible interpretation of the numbers that are being arrived  
at a little later

As we saw previously, this set of three paragraphs is also followed by a paragraph that includes the name Simon.

Once again, the name Yeshua Simon has been revealed in code.

Now the three Messiah teaching is addressed.

The next paragraph includes the name Moses, and the paragraph that comes after that includes the phrase “son of man”. This is confirmation that Yeshua Simon is being accepted as fulfilling the three responsibilities of the Messiah.

To this point, we have decoded the following from information shown in the Gospel of Mark:

The Wisdom (Holy Spirit) of Yeshua Simon, the Messiah (Holy One of God) Yeshua Simon, a prophet like a new Moses a priest like the “suffering servant” aka “son of man” written of by the prophet Isaiah.

As has been established, the encoded occurrences of the name Yeshua are composed of sets of 21 lines and now we find another set of 21 lines made up of the next 2 paragraphs.

First paragraph starting with verse 13 of 7 lines and the second starting with verse 15 of 14 lines = 21 lines.

## First paragraph Chapter 2 verses 13-14

13 He went out again beside the  
sea; and all the crowd gathered about  
him, and he taught them. 14 And as  
he passed on, he saw Levi the son of = yea or yah  
Alphaeus sitting at the tax office, and  
he said to him, "Follow me," And he  
rose and followed him.

Here we have another affirmation, in the sense of Alphaeus responding to the invitation to follow Jesus with a "yea" or "yah" acted out by his rising and following.



## Second paragraph verses 15 – 17

15 And as he sat at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were sitting with Jesus and his disciples; for there were many who followed him. 16 And the scribes of = shua the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples. “Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?” 17 And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

This scene clearly symbolizes “shua” as in the mission of Jesus to “help or “save” sinners.

The next paragraph starting with verse 18 contains 21 lines itself to continue the 21 line patterns encoding the name of Yeshua.

The Essenes wrote of the themselves as representing the New Covenant in their writings of the Dead Sea Scrolls and so we find encoded in the two sets of 21 lines when including the 21 lines of verses 18 - 22 concerning the new wine skins for the new wine: Yeshua of the New Covenant

Then concluding the opening two chapters of Mark, the next paragraph includes a mention of King David. This represents the third role of the Messiah, his duty to lead the spiritual nation of Israel as its King.

We now have the title page of Yeshua's book along with a tribute and confirmation of his acceptance among the Essenes as their Messiah, i.e. their prophet, priest and king:

The Wisdom of Yeshua Simon, the Messiah. Yeshua Simon is our prophet, like a new Moses. He is our priest, as Isaiah wrote. Yeshua of the New Covenant; the rightful king of Israel.

The next paragraph is shown as beginning Chapter 3 of Mark. I would think that those verses should properly be included in Chapter 2. Remember, the chapter and verse numbers are a much later addition to the book.

The aforementioned use of a phrase or word appearing in the correct position in Mark or John in order to correspond with the same phrase or word in The Wisdom of Yeshua ben Simon is utilized in the paragraph which I feel was put in Chapter 3 mistakenly. We find the phrase, “Stretch out you hand” near the end of the paragraph and this must be meant to correlate to this passage in The Wisdom of Yeshua ben Simon which is found at the end of Chapter 4 in that book:

The Wisdom of Yeshua ben Simon

Chapter 4 verse 31 Let not your hand be extended to  
receive,  
but withdrawn when it is time  
to repay.

Again, this serves to enable a student to orient themselves so that they can more directly perceive the connections between the instruction in Mark or John with the words of Yeshua found in his book.

In my book, as I also previously mentioned, the first few comparisons that are made between Mark and Yeshua are not lined up exactly. It so happened that I didn’t understand the use of the matching phrases and words until later on in my analysis of the materials and this particular occurrence was one that I missed.

Now, a look at two of the numbers that were generated by this analysis of Mark.

The number 21 occurs 4 times in connection with the name of Yeshua. The number 21 is almost always considered the number for the Lord's name of YHWH. This would make sense, obviously. But, to delve a little further into the use of 21 for those particular verse sets; the role that Jesus assumes in the gospels as the representative of God in his words and actions can be seen in the scenes that are described.

The first set of verses for Yeshua also gives us the number 966, for the 9 lines plus the 6 lines plus the 6 lines. Some believe that this number equates to the name Bethsaida which is translated as "house of fish" in english. Again, pretty self-explanatory if accurate.

We could pick out a lot more numbers, of course, but a survey of opinions on numbers left me generally confused and frustrated. It seems like a case for them meaning almost anything you'd like can and is made by one writer or another.

One last thought. It was the name Yeshua that led me to these patterns, as I have related. When I was studying the gospels for my book, *A Way in the Wilderness*, the hebrew name for Jesus was not in my mind at all. It could be the case that the creators of the NOAB were, similarly, not thinking about the name Yeshua when they were doing their very important work.

However, a few words should be said about the possibility that the creators of the NOAB were absolutely cognizant of the significance of the manner in which they chose to present their translation of the Holy Scriptures.

There could be any number of reasons for them to remain silent about what they may have discovered during their examination of the gospels. Personally, I did pray to the Lord to guide me in choosing whether to share what I felt was there.

After surveying the various editions of the NOAB I have learned that the edition known as:

THE NEW OXFORD  
ANNOTATED BIBLE  
WITH THE  
APOCRYPHA

Revised Standard Version  
Containing the Second Edition of the New Testament  
And an Expanded Edition of the Apocrypha  
Edited by  
Herbert G. May Bruce M. Metzger  
Copyright © 1973, 1977 By Oxford University Press, Inc.

This version is the only one of the numerous editions that have been produced from the work of Herbert G. May and Bruce M. Metzger titled “New Oxford Annotated Bible” that exhibit all of the coded material in the manner I’ve written about here. Beginning in 1952 a number of different NOAB’s have been published with some of the coded material exactly as shown in the 1977 book. But only the 1977 book contains all of the material, exactly.

Thank you, and now I pray to our Heavenly Father that this effort may be a blessing to you. Amen.

WAVE WALKER!

By Harry C. Marschner

Yeshua. Walk on the water  
Carry the truth for all to witness!  
Yeshua, Walk on the water  
Life-giving water from seas of forgiveness!  
God, is your Father  
Love without limit  
He shows in Thee who have set us free!

Yeshua, Give us your wisdom  
Show us the reason where there was none before!  
Yeshua, Give us your wisdom  
Break down the prisons keeping us from you, Lord!  
Our hearts are yearning  
Like love unfolding  
Your words bring peace  
They're your kingdom's keys!

All God's love and mercy  
Is reflected in your works!  
All the power and majesty  
Of a king among his people!

Yeshua, show us your power  
Satan no longer binds us to sickness!  
Yeshua, show us your power  
Your holy presence brings mighty faith to us!  
God is your Father  
Love without limit  
He shows in thee who have set us free!  
You have set us free!

# The Seven Chakras In The Gospels

By Harry C. Marschner

You have likely heard about the theory that the spirit written of in the gospels as driving Jesus into the wilderness after his baptism is a force known as the “kundalini”.

The “kundalini” is a powerful energy that is associated with the practice of yoga and Hinduism in the minds of most. The thought that Christianity would be associated with this force as well is something that it seems like most Christians would reject.

There are many warnings on the internet from Christians concerning the dangers of “kundalini”. It is branded as “satanic” quite often. The Bible is quoted as preaching against this spirit.

In the gospel of Mark some spirit, perhaps the “Holy Spirit”, is described as “driving” Jesus into the wilderness where he is tempted by satan.

Is this the “kundalini”?

Is this a warning against the “kundalini”?

At the pentecost event the apostles of Jesus were described as appearing mad or at least intoxicated from the “Holy Spirit” - another warning?

Jesus claimed that the “Holy Spirit” is a comfort and a helper.

The pharisees charge that Jesus is possessed by an evil spirit.

This debate seems then, to be continuing in our present

time. Is the spirit of Mark the “kundalini”? Is the “kundalini” good or evil?

Could the “Holy Spirit” be just another name for the “kundalini”?

No, it could not – because it is!

We can be certain of this.

We can be absolutely certain of this because the first two chapters of the

Gospel of Mark contain a meditation on the “Seven Chakras”; while the rest of the book – chapters 3 thru 16 - is also organized to present the chakras again.

In like fashion, the Gospel of John is also based on the chakras.



The “kundalini” is directed or channeled from its point of origin at the base of the spine to the top of the head by means of these chakras during exercises or meditation, most commonly, in the practice of yoga and in Hinduism. The more common identification is with yoga and Hinduism, but the chakras and the force known as “kundalini” are actually found in many different disciplines and practices throughout the world. And yes, it can be shown that Christianity is in fact also included.

The fundamental place that the Chakras hold throughout the cultures of the earth is undeniable.

Many millenniums in the past humans encountered a very powerful spirit that spurred some individuals to behave in a very frightening manner. Clearly, the chakras system was developed as one method of tempering this potentially dangerous phenomenon.

### Seven Chakras Meditation In The Gospel of Mark

From the “New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha:  
Expanded Edition:  
Revised Standard Version” published in 1978.

Ch. 1 v. 9-11

The baptism of Jesus by John, the awakening of the One Chakra – the Root or Base Chakra located at the base of the spine where the “kundalini” is taught as originating – with associated color of Red.

Ch. 1 v. 12-13

Jesus is driven into the wilderness by the spirit where he succeeds in resisting the temptations of Satan and is ministered to by angels. Two Chakra – the Sacral or Reproductive Chakra located in the area of the reproductive organs, the seat of temptations with the associated color of Orange.

Ch. 1 v. 14-15

Jesus returns from the wilderness and begins public preaching, teaching.

Three Chakra – The Solar Plexus or Abdominal Chakra associated with courage with associated color of Yellow.

These first three chakras seem to be intentionally grouped together here which is a traditional custom in chakras disciplines.

The next verses describe the Lord's interactions with the public and the reaction to his preaching and teaching.

Ch. 1 v. 29-34

Jesus heals the sick – Four Chakra – Heart Chakra associated with compassion, mercy and forgiveness with the color of Green.

Ch. 1 v. 35-45

Some specific teachings of Jesus are recounted with a reference to Moses, the first Hebrew prophet. Five Chakra – Throat or Communication Chakra associated with the color

of Blue or Sky Blue which is traditionally associated with Moses.

## Ch. 2 v. 1-22

These verses are concerned with religious practices and the term “Son of Man” is introduced. The “Son of Man” is also referred to as the “Suffering Servant” in the biblical book of Isaiah with the role of the priest in Judaism being the focus. Jesus also is spoken of as the “bridegroom” which is used in conjunction with the symbol of the “bride” for “wisdom” in the bible and the new wine in the new wine skins also brings to mind “wisdom”. Six Chakra – Third Eye or Wisdom Chakra located above the brow between the eyes with the associated color of Dark Blue or Indigo.

## Ch. 2 v. 23 -28

The subject becomes power and authority and King David is remembered.

Seven Chakra – Crown Chakra with the associated color of Purple.

End of Chapter 2 and the first Chakras Meditation in the Gospel of Mark.

My book, “A Way in The Wilderness” provides evidence that the Gospels of Mark and John were derived very precisely from the Apocryphal book of the bible,

“The Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira” which is also known as “Sirach” and the “Wisdom of Jesus Ben Simon” or by the title “Ecclesiasticus”.

The similarities between the aforementioned gospels and Ben Sira then provide our confirmation of the intent of the writer of Mark to create a chakra meditation within the ostensible recitation of the story of Jesus in the first century A.D..

This assurance comes from the chakra mediation located within the pages of “The Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira”.

Seven Chakras Meditation In “The Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira”

Note: The quotes are from “The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha:

Expanded Edition: Revised Standard Version” published in 1978

Ch. 1 v.6

“The root of wisdom - to whom has it been revealed? Her clever devices - who knows them?” One Chakra - Root or Base - color of Red

Ch, 1 v.9-10

“The Lord himself created wisdom; he saw her and apportioned her, he poured her out upon all his works.

She dwells with all flesh according to his gift, and he supplied her to those who love him.

Wisdom is the judgment needed to resist temptation associated with the flesh.

Two Chakra – Sacral – color of Orange

Ch. 1 v. 11

“The fear of the Lord is glory and exultation, and gladness and a crown of rejoicing.” Three Chakra – Solar Plexus – Fear and Courage - Color Yellow

The meditation on the fear of the Lord continues through Ch. 1 v. 30

Ch. 2

“My son, if you come forward to serve the Lord, prepare yourself for temptation.

Set your heart right and be steadfast, and do not be hasty in times of calamity.”

Four Chakra – Heart – Color Green

Chapter Two is a heart meditation completely.

Ch. 3

“Listen to me your father, o children; and act accordingly, that you may be kept in safety.”

Five Chakra – Throat – Communication – Color Blue

Chapter 3 constitutes a meditation on the Five Chakra which is associated with guidance and the Prophet Moses

Ch. 4 v. 1

“My son, deprive not the poor of his living, and do not keep needy eyes waiting.”

Six Chakra – Wisdom – Good Judgement – Color Indigo

Chapter 4 v. 1 thru 10 is concerned with community and the priesthood.

Ch. 4 v.11

“Wisdom exalts her sons and gives help to those who seek her.

Seven Chakra – Crown – Color Purple or White – Accepting the authority of God the Father, becoming a son or child of God.

Ch. 4 v. 28 “Strive even to death for the truth and the Lord God will fight for you.”

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The Chakra method of organization continues in both the Gospel of Mark in Chapter 3 and The Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira in Chapter 4 v. 29 with the start of a new series of meditations beginning with the One Chakra again.

In The Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira the next meditation ends at Chapter 23 while the meditation continues to the end of the Gospel of Mark. At Chapter 24 in Jesus's book a new meditation is begun which corresponds with the Gospel of John from its start and continues to the ends of both books.

In Jesus's book an aside mentions his travels abroad to the other nations of that region. It is reasonable to assume that the teachings of the Chakras were discovered by Jesus during his journey. But, in fact, we know that this is not the case because the Chakras system is also found in the books of the Hebrew Bible.

Some have asserted that the presence of the Chakras in the Gospels and in the Hebrew Old Testament point to the influence of Hinduism on the early Hebrews. I think there is ample evidence to reject that theory. Artifacts found around the globe show that the Kundalini and the Chakras were taught for millennia before the practices of Hinduism took form and were documented.

For instance, Sumerian art dated to the era of 3000 BC shows the use of the serpent symbolism associated with the kundalini. In the cultures of America there is found artwork with representations of the serpent and chakras as well.

Oral traditions of Africa lead us to conclude that the kundalini and the chakras were part of the earliest human cultures and this seems to be born out by their presence in the Americas. The groups in America were isolated from

the other peoples of the earth for in some cases thousands of years, which would indicate that the practices of the chakras were brought with them when they entered the Americas.

But now, let's look at the Hebrew OT use of the chakras.

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## Seven Chakras Meditation in the Hebrew Bible

The bible books of Genesis through Samuel contain accounts of the lives of six men who in chronological order provide another meditation on the seven chakras.

Abraham - One Chakra – A desire to serve God causes him to be willing to sacrifice his own son, Isaac, to the Lord; believing it is His Will.

Jacob – Two Chakra – Reproductive Chakra is recalled by the fecundity of his fathering 12 sons by 4 women. Jacob also succumbs to temptation and tricks his brother into giving Jacob his birthright.

Joseph – Three Chakra - Courage is shown by his honesty in advising and counseling the mighty Pharaoh.

Joseph – Four Chakra - He shows great mercy and compassion by forgiving his brothers even though they attempted to murder him.

Moses – Five Chakra – Moses becomes the Lord's representative in speaking with the Pharaoh and his own Hebrew nation with great eloquence.

Aaron – Six Chakra - Displays judgment and wisdom as the first priest of the Hebrews. From "Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira"- Describing Aaron - - "with a gold crown upon his turban inscribed like a signet with "Holiness"

King David – Seven Chakra – As in the Gospel of Mark,

he is called on to represent the Crown chakra of power and authority.

Perhaps one tendency in our own culture, the Judeo-Christian or western world, is an understandable desire to give a special status to our scriptures.

When we speak of our sacred literature as the “word of God”, we can sometimes forget that, though this literature is inspired by God, it still had to be written down in a language and style that was a product of its own time and place.

The parallels and similarities of the Hebrew and Christian literature with the writings of other cultures has been duly noted and some scholars and researchers have found these common elements to be a source of criticism.

But our western traditions did not arise in a vacuum. The written word must be understood as an extension of the millenniums-old oral traditions which preceded it. The chakras give us a window through which we can see a glimpse of that so-called prehistoric time.

Like music, dance, language, and religion itself, the kundalini, or Holy Spirit, or Serpent spirit, etc., depending on your culture, and the seven chakras represent a basic element of human life throughout our world and stretch back in time to the remotest past of which we have knowledge.

We can know, with certainty, that people of at least 15,000 years ago were well- acquainted with the chakras system from the teachings of native Americans.

Though separated from other global cultures from at least that time forward the beliefs are found in their traditions. Clearly, when modern human beings began to disperse across the globe this was something that was carried with them.

As time went on the beliefs became expressed in more and more diverse ways pertaining to the development and evolution of the distinct tastes of the various groups. But, as we see from the universal acceptance of the chakras by such disparate cultures, they were too ingrained in their societies to ever be discarded.

All of the research that I have done for the last 40 years or so has been motivated by a desire to follow the guidance of Jesus in seeking the truth. “Lies cause suffering”. I believe this. “The truth will set you free”. I believe this.

But I also believe that ultimately, human beings are not enabled to comprehend reality, that is “truth”, completely. So, we must make choices, hopefully informed choices, as to what we will put our faith in, even though we can’t be certain of the truth at all times. This process requires judgment.wisdom.

From “Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira” -

“The fear of the Lord is wisdom and instruction and He delights in fidelity and meekness.”

The lesson of the kundalini and the chakras is, for me, one of humility and discipline. It teaches us that human beings must be aware of and be wary of the power of our own self-interests or ego. This powerful spur to action, which the spirit of the kundalini represents, cannot be blindly and foolishly obeyed. It must be tempered by good judgment. wisdom.

From “Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira”-

“If you desire wisdom, keep the commandments and the Lord will supply it to you.”

From the the words of Jesus in the gospel of Matthew-

“...and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

For me, the Seven Chakras system provides a tool for tempering the spirit. It is a method designed to bring our better nature, our higher self, to bear in making the choice of just what action is best in response to our awareness of the need to do something!

Our Creator has given us the freedom and responsibility to make these choices ourselves, and so, we learn, through instruction and discipline, that the best course of action is to connect with Him and seek His guidance in such times that demand a reaction.

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The various religious traditions and disciplines, like the Seven Chakras are one way to bring us to the proper spirit to connect with God.

At some point in everyone's life, crises will come to some degree or another. Obviously, people realized this many, many thousands of years ago.

The need to be prepared to deal with these situations, then, is one motivation for the development of the Seven Chakras, The Ten Commandments, yoga, meditation, rituals of various sorts, and prayer, etc..

In particular, the Hebrew chakras meditation shows the decision-making of Abraham. The Lord, or His spirit, came to Abraham as he was about to kill his son, Isaac. Abraham had believed that it was God's will that he sacrifice his child. God arrives just in time to stop this awful mistake from ensuing.

The Lord wanted Abraham to have faith in Him, not kill his son. And so, we are taught the proper course of action in response to the spirit. Seek God.

We find Moses reacting with rage to injustice and murdering a man. He must flee his homeland and only when he goes to the mountain in search of God is he able to learn the proper way to follow the spirit. He goes to speak with the Pharaoh.

The Seven Chakras are incorporated into the stories of Abraham and his descendants which leads us to connect the dots from Abraham to the seat of our best judgment, the Crown Chakra, symbolized by the story of King David, the



penitent sinner, who has acknowledged his dependence on the Lord.

God chose David to replace the unworthy ruler, King Saul, the personification of the unenlightened, foolish, reactionary ego who eventually kills himself.

From “Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira”- “Trust in Him and He will help you, make your way straight and hope in Him.”

“For the Lord is compassionate and merciful, He forgives sins and He saves in time of affliction”.

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But what about the times when there really is an emergency that requires an aggressive course of action as signaled by a powerful spirit?

In the Hebrew bible that we are now taking a look at, the very question is raised in the section between the 6<sup>th</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup> chakras references. This is the meditation on Judgment and Authority.

When the Hebrews arrive at the promised land it is already occupied. In seeking God's guidance they decide that the present inhabitants of the home that the people of God desire must be destroyed. They are judged to be unacceptable to the Lord because of their religious practices and customs.

A righteous cause having been established, the Hebrews attack and kill the unworthy residents in the name of God and appropriate the land that the Lord has told them is rightfully theirs.

Even though the Ten Commandments have been introduced, which specifically condemn violence, the Hebrews find that exceptions must be made.

But, in a variation of the decision-making we saw Abraham progress through earlier, the blood-letting is said to have reached its limit under King Saul, when the Lord makes it plain that His will is now for the Hebrews to make peace with their neighbors and embark on a future path of holiness as God's covenant with Moses had decreed would be their destiny if they kept His commandments.

To symbolize this new direction, the Lord makes David their ruler.

The goal then, of our higher nature winning out in the end, is confirmed and we learn of the mercy of the Lord in forgiving violations of His commandments, or sins, when there is a genuine change of heart.

What about the out and out embracing of the power of the kundalini for evil and selfish designs?

authorHOUSE®

“As you sow, so shall you reap.”

“What goes around, comes around.”

“Live by the sword, die by the sword.”

“The sins of the fathers are visited on the sons.”

“When you start a fire take heed that you are not consumed by it yourself.”

All of these sentiments and the countless others that warn of the dangers of unwarranted aggression have been proven out over and over again throughout history as warlike peoples have arisen and then been destroyed.

In the “History of the Choctaws and the Chickasaws”, which was a book that was published around the year 1900, the author, an elderly man at the time, recalls his experiences growing up in the years when some native Americans were living in their traditional manner as they had for millenniums; specifically the people of the Choctaw and Chickasaw tribes. The youth of the writer had been spent in the regions now known as Alabama and Mississippi as a neighbor of the Choctaws whom he grew to embrace as dear friends.

The man repeats a story that he read about in a book that was published in the 1820's by a christian missionary who had lived with the Choctaw people in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. The missionary had occasion to sit down with one of the elders of the tribe for an interview. The preacher asked the elder to tell him where the oral histories of his tribe said

that his people had come from. The elder explained to the missionary that his people had once lived very far away in the land now known as Mexico according to their history.

He said that the area in those days was highly populated with many different groups and individual tribes. At some point the Aztecs, which the elder identified specifically, became very aggressive and began to attack the other tribes and so the Choctaws had to flee the area. They wandered to the east for a long time until they finally found their present locale where they were able to settle.

authorHOUSE

It is known that the Aztec Empire, feared for its ferocity, began sometime in the 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> c. AD; which would be the era that the Choctaw elder was speaking about. It's also known that a highly revered god of the Aztecs was their god of war who they depicted as a serpent. Again, the traditional symbol for the kundalini seen among many groups of peoples around the world. This symbolism could be meant to represent the spinal chord of a human being.

Eventually, true to form, the Aztec Empire was most cruelly destroyed by the conquistadors of the Spanish Empire.

Of perhaps greater interest was the history of the Choctaws before they lived in Mexico as the elder continued with his account.

Precise dates and distances were not preserved, apparently, but the elder said that before the tribe settled in Mexico they had lived a great distance away on the other side of the great sea to the west.

A great "evil" force arose in that place, according to their history. In order to survive and escape the evil the people fled across the sea in large sea-going boats and even their everyday coastal type of smaller canoes.

Following a journey of many days, they say that they eventually landed on the west coast of North America and traveling along the coast they found a place in the region that we now know as Mexico and made a home for themselves.

If we use a little logic, we can reasonably deduce that this particular tribe, at least, was one that believed in living in

peace. Obviously, for many thousands of years the world's peaceful peoples have had to deal with more aggressive ones.

Is the kundalini always responsible for this friction?

If we identify kundalini with ego or pride, we must allow that self-interest is the catalyst for most conflicts between human beings.

But why then did our Creator include this force in His perfect work?

Why is there a snake in the Garden of Eden?

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We have looked back to a past of possibly 10,000 or more years through the help of our Choctaw elder who was interviewed in the 1790's. Recently, the elders of another ancient people, the Dogon tribe of Africa consented to an interview in which they shared some of the oral history of their culture.

The Dogon have teachings that they assert have been handed down within their tribe for the last 40,000 years. One of the things their elders have shared is the belief that the earth is a living creature. Another belief that they have preserved through this time is that the life that we are familiar with here on earth is not native to this planet.

Their oral history relates that life as we think of it came to earth from some other place in the universe as microscopic seeds or spores and the resultant life forms, especially human beings, that developed here are not welcome here.

They liken, though not exactly, our planet to a one-celled life form such as the cells one would find in a human body.

The earth, in this view is a living part of a larger being of some form. As a part of this greater whole, the earth has a role that it plays within this creature much like the cells of the human body. In order to function and perform its duties the earth must communicate with the other cells of the creature, the various other planets, stars, celestial bodies, etc..

The analogy that they use is to radio signals, though they say the comparison is only approximate; the signals are energy of some sort. The foreign life that we and the other creatures living on earth represent are a problem for the



planet because they interfere with the functioning of the earth and the communications it must maintain with the other cells of the larger being.

In particular, though, the earth really dislikes the interference caused by human beings. Our constructions and technology are a big problem. But there is also a spiritual component in that the humans tend to put out very negative and disturbing energy.

authorHOUSE®

Looking at the main Dogon points individually then, we have:

The earth is a living one cell creature. Some most recently published scientific research has offered this possibility for serious consideration.

Life forms on earth, including human beings, originated somewhere other than earth, arriving here as microscopic seeds or spores. Some most recently published scientific research has also offered this as a possibility for consideration.

The earth functions much as a cell in the human body within some larger living being. Very recently, research being done with the largest particle accelerator ever built, located in France, has raised this possibility as well. There was detected what appears to be communication between the subatomic particles that that are studying and the opinion has been expressed that this may be evidence that the universe that we live in is actually one living being

All of the studies that I cite above can be located in the mainstream news sources on the internet. Searching the topics will bring up the news releases that have appeared over the last few years.

The Dogon elders have said that earth is trying to rid itself of us, essentially. The tremendous increase in the human population is especially intolerable for the earth according to the elders. Through the past the earth has been able to work around the small human presence, but now it is becoming unable to.

The very unstable nature of the planet is its response, its defense system.

Population control has been a very integral part of the cultures of the earth for most of human history until quite recently, certainly, necessitated by the challenges posed by the earth's volatile nature we can surmise.

authorHOUSE®

The Dogons have expressed the opinion that a relatively small number of humans could be tolerated by the earth for perhaps the whole of its natural life. But in the massive numbers we have reached we are in danger of causing the earth's host system to eliminate the cell as non-functioning. Remember, it is only one of many billions or trillions. If it cannot communicate it could be discarded.

Paradoxically, the more people that we have here on this planet, the greater our chance of developing the technology to leave this very unhappy world; while the more people we become, the more unhappy the earth becomes and the closer we get to causing it to be destroyed or maybe even to self-destruct.

It is our egos, our pride, that has spurred us to not only greatly increase our numbers, but also to battle each other and in the process of developing ever more sophisticated ways to wage war, to invent the technology that could one day take us off earth to other worlds.

It once occurred to me that we are doing the earth a service by creating the technology to someday protect it from space objects that could strike it and cause harm or even destroy it.

Yet, recently researchers have opined that the earth may actually depend on the space objects for its sustenance. We could be keeping it from being fed if we are able to ward the objects off!

Whether we are here to help the earth in some way may be the next great question to answer, obviously, the earth

cannot be expected to do anything but continue to react as it has.

One theory that is being advanced is the idea that life is here on earth to destroy it.

In essence, life is performing the function of anti-bodies within our host creature. In this scenario earth would be a foreign invader, a bacteria cell perhaps, that needs to be attacked.

authorHOUSE®

It's easy to see how the kundalini can be a true life-saver. On an individual basis it can provide a burst of energy that can help in the event that a predator, assailant, act of nature, or even simple hunger may be threatening to end a life. But it also can provoke a response to nothing more than a threat to one's pride. So, from that point of view, its value becomes as a teacher to us of our need to be wise.

But is there another function? Is there a genetic or racial pride that, in a more subtle way, drives us to recognize the danger presented by making a planet like the earth our home? On a more instinctive level have we been reacting to the very real threat of extinction if we remain here?

The die appears to be cast at this point, since a commitment to space travel and the colonization of new planets is espoused by governments, scientists, and businessmen alike around the globe. The will to preserve our species has become a watchword.

Is this the purpose that our Creator willed when He put the snake in the Garden of Eden? It is the way we have chosen to go.

Other creatures here on earth have developed amazing abilities and bodily adaptations. Could humans be jumping the gun in a sense? Our species is relatively young and who knows what the Lord may have planned for us?

From "Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira"-

"No one can say, 'What is this?' 'Why is that?' for everything has been created for its use."

“Before a man are life and death, and whichever he chooses will be given to him.”

In a book published in the 1840’s titled, “Isis”, an Englishman relates the experiences and thoughts that he had while visiting Egypt in the 1830’s. He remarks quite often on his personal philosophies concerning religion, culture and life in general in the course of recounting his trip.

One of his ideas was that the empire of Egypt became too feminized, symbolized in his mind by an unhealthy devotion to the female Egyptian goddess, Isis.

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His view was that the seductive attraction of the goddess and her power to impart wisdom and peace to her spiritual children led to the Egyptians abandoning the source of their power, which was their ability to wage war; causing them to lose their great empire.

The author cast this in the form of a warning to his own British people who he feared could follow a similar path with like outcome for their own great empire.

He urged them to remain fighting men and to continue to impose their will on the rest of humanity through warfare, no matter the cost.

The Jewish historian, Josephus, expressed the opinion, writing in the first century AD, that the Pharisees were of such a mindset as the Englishman. Though no one knew for certain, he wrote, that the Pharisees, some believed, had become organized in response to the Hebrew transition from a warlike people striving to create a great empire under King Saul to the path chosen by King David which embraced a peaceful way of wisdom and holiness.

This devotion to war was seen in the Pharisee-led revolt against the invaders of Israel known as the Seleucids, their revolt against the Hasmonean appeasers who accepted the rule of the Romans and their opposition to the Zadokite rulers of Israel who sought to make peace with the Seleucids rather than fight them and drive them out of Israel.

In the years following the withdraw of the Seleucids from Israel the new Pharisee-directed Israel immediately waged war on their surrounding neighbor nations with the goal of



establishing an empire. They were intent on turning back the years and correcting the mistake that they believed Israel had made in following the policies of King David, according to the writings of Josephus.

In the writings of Jesus Ben Sira I believe that we find the voice of the Zadokites.

He spoke of the futility of putting faith in violence. He pointed to the succession of empires that had arisen and then been destroyed. Not one had endured.

They had all met the same fate. He prophesied that one day the Seleucids, the imperial occupiers of Israel at that time, would surely meet theirs.

g u t t e r

It was at this time that Josephus said, those who adhered to the Zadokite path organized themselves in opposition to the Pharisees. In my book

“A Way In The Wilderness” the connection between this opposition group of loyal Zadokites and the group who became known as Christians is shown.

It is necessary to understand this connection in order to understand why the Seven Chakras meditation came to be included in the Gospels of Mark and John.

The role of Jesus Ben Sira in the faith of the first century Christians was as their teacher, their inspiration, their hope, their prophet and their Messiah.

The Christians were the first century AD voice of the Zadokites. They were continuing the work of Jesus Ben Sira in opposing the path of warfare that the Pharisees continued to espouse; this time in response to the Roman occupation of their homeland.

The Seven Chakras meditation is fashioned to lead to holiness and peace within a person and a nation and a world. Just as Jesus Ben Sira had prophesied in the second century BC, the ill-advised opposition to the Romans in the first century led to terrible suffering, destruction and death for the Hebrews.

In rejecting the covenant which God made with Moses, which the Christians referred to as the “new” covenant, the Pharisees rejected the future that God had promised Israel through Moses, which was one of holiness and peace.

Jesus Ben Sira had written that the mission of Israel, as given to them by God, was to share the Ten Commandments with the entire world. The holy nation of Israel was destined to bring all the peoples of the earth into covenant with God and bring peace to the planet.

As we have seen from the writings of Jesus and the Gospels, one connection to holiness that was shared throughout much of the world at the time of the first century, was the devotion to the chakras. A common goal of peace could be appealed to through the chakras which would be familiar to many.

The Ten Commandments then provide a way of life to go with the practice of chakras meditation in bringing the world under God's rule.

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authorHOUSE

This, we have seen by the Seven Chakras meditation being included in the Hebrew bible surrounding the introduction of the Ten Commandments and the establishment of the “new” covenant.

From “Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira”- “If you will, you can keep the commandments, and to act faithfully is a matter of your own choice.”

And so the choice has been made. It’s off to new worlds we go.

In one sense we can take heart in the fact that at least some of our swords have been beaten into plowshares. Rockets that once carried deadly bombs will now be transporting colonists.

The space explorers of the future will be carrying the same pride and the same kundalini that have been with us always, however. That’s life, and not ours to decide. What is within our prerogative remains the way that we view these powerful forces and how we choose to handle them.

It cannot really be charged that we are running away from our problems by leaving earth behind. This is not a truly hospitable place for human beings.

A change of scenery might be just what the doctor ordered. In a more peaceful setting the wisdom of our ancestors might really resonate with people.

But we should consider the other life forms here which, at least in the view of the Dogon, the earth seems to be ok with.

From “Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira”- “Accept whatever is brought upon you, and in changes that humble you be patient.

For gold is tested in the fire, and acceptable men in the furnace of humiliation.

Trust in him, and he will help you; make your ways straight, and hope in him.”

authorHOUSE®

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Chakras Meditation in Mark begins with Chapter 3

First Chakra – Root or Base

Ch. 3 v. 1 thru v. 31

Second Chakra – Sacral

Ch. 4 v. 1 thru v. 29

Third Chakra – Solar Plexus

Ch. 4 v. 30 thru v. 41

Fourth Chakra – Heart

Ch. 5 v. 1 thru Ch. 6 v. 54

Fifth Chakra – Throat.

Ch. 7 v. 1 thru Ch. 12 v. 44

Sixth Chakra – Third Eye or Wisdom

Ch. 13 v. 1 thru v. 15 v. 15

Seventh Chakra – Crown

Ch. 15 v. 16 thru Ch. 16 v. 8

As taken from “The New Oxford Annotated Bible with  
Apocrypha”

Expanded Edition

Revised Standard Version

1978

## The Chakras Meditation in the Gospel of John

First Root or Base - Ch. 1 Baptism

Second Sacral - Ch. 2-3 Marriage, Rebirth, Temptation

Third Solar Plexus - Ch. 4 Courage

Fourth Heart - Ch. 5 Forgiveness, Healing

Fifth Throat - Ch. 6 thru Ch. 12 Communication, Teaching, Prophet

Sixth Third Eye or Wisdom - Ch. 13 thru Ch. 17 Wisdom, Servant, Priest

Seventh Crown - Ch. 18 thru Ch. 21 Communion with God, Kingdom of God

From "The New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha"  
Expanded Edition Revised Standard Version  
1978



This is one expression, in my opinion, of the Seven Chakras as found in Ohio.

Nearly 1400 feet long, the Great Serpent Mound is not able to be dated with much certainty, but it presents the chakras as a serpent, which is a symbol found in many of the cultures of the world, including the Judeo-Christian.

The well defined coiled tail and the triumphant head in the act of swallowing its prey, shown as an egg, is separated by 5 uniform, very distinct flexes of its body.





‘This is a carved relief found in a temple in Egypt. This is believed to date from around the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> century BC. We see the 5 flexes again between the tail and head. The figure shown standing places the end of the snake at the base of his spine and then progressing left to right we see a figure in meditation pose and then a figure showing a round object on their head which is a match for the crown chakra which is taught as being above the top of the head.



This is an Aztec “serpent god”, apparently it is a god of war though it is not identified. From their imperial era with the 5 flexes between the two heads which would symbolize the kundalini and the 7 chakras. Circa 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> c. AD.



This is from the Central American Olmec culture crrca 1200-400 BC. It appears to show the kundalini, a bird-serpent, or feathered serpent. The basket being held out has been postulated as symbolizing a gift that is received from God; so the relief could represent the kundalini as a gift given by God.



Here is what is known as the double helix serpent of the Sumerian culture circa 2000 BC in the middle east. You can see the 5 flexes indicating the chakras and the kundalini energy featured in all the figures depicted. The two entwining serpents would be a symbol of the choice to be made of how to use the power – for war or peace – good or evil?

Moses, The Essene  
By  
Harry C. Marschner

Book of Exodus Chapter 3 v. 13-15

Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them

‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?” God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And he said,

“Say this to the people of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

Footnote to Exodus Ch. 3 v. 13-15 typically found in “study” bibles:

Moses’ second question assumes a polytheistic environment; thus he must know the identity of the God who is dealing with him.

I AM WHO I AM is an etymology of the Israelite name for God, YHWH, probably pronounced Yahweh. YHWH is treated as a verbal form derived from “to be” and formulated in the first person because God is the speaker.

Actually YHWH is a third person form and may mean, “He causes to be”.

The name does not indicate God’s eternal being but his action and presence in historical affairs).

This strange occurrence in the Old Testament is present in nearly all of the so-called “study Bibles”; those which include notes and footnotes. Why would the scholars that prepared the translation of this text not simply correct what they are pointing out in their footnote is a simple mistake in the translation of the word, “YHWH”? Rather than “I Am”, which is cited by a biblical prophet in a subsequent book as a heresy that should be condemned, why not “He that is doing” or “He who is responsible” which is cited here in the footnote as the most correct. ©

This would be in keeping with the story of Moses meeting with the Creator.

If the word, YHWH, should be translated as, “He causes to be”, why not have that so shown in the body of the translation instead of “I AM”?

Remember, this note is only found in the noted and footnoted Bibles. If you are reading a standard English translation of the Old Testament, you won't be aware of the mistake. Of course, if you are reading the Study Bible type of translation, you would still need to reference the footnote to learn of the error.

In my book, “A Way In The Wilderness”, I showed how the true nature of the purpose for the writing of the two gospels, Mark and John, was concealed by the authors because of the danger they faced from the Roman, as well as Jewish authorities. Did this deceptive approach to their books become ingrained in the Christian movement as it progressed and grew?

In the first century AD, an attempt was made to disassociate the authors of the gospels from the work of Jesus Ben Sira if I am correct in my supposition.

The attempt being made in the English Bibles is to avoid revealing that the Egyptian goddess known as Isis is a very important figure in Judaism as well as Christianity. Again, my opinion.

Let's look at the verses from Exodus in another way.

Instead of “I AM”, which we're told is not correct, we will use the third person form of the verb, ‘to be’, as we have been advised by the footnote is most likely the actual meaning.

But, instead of the phrase “He causes to be”, we will use the well-known Hebrew name for God – IS – which when spoken becomes, “Ease”.

I am not conversant or an expert in the Hebrew language, certainly, but a look at the Hebrew original for this section of the book of Exodus will show that the word YHWH is indeed repeated in the part of the verse we are examining.

Thus, we arrive at the name for the Egyptian goddess of wisdom and peace, “ISIS” which when spoken becomes, “Easy”.

authorHOUSE



The word “IS” is found not only in the name Israel but also in names such as, Isaiah, Islam, Issac, Ishtar, Issa and as we see, Isis. The use of “Is” is found commonly throughout the middle east in it’s various ancient religions; it represents the “Creator” in both monotheistic and polytheistic systems alike.

In researching the story of the name, Isis, we find also, that the Egyptian goddess enjoyed widespread popularity in the ancient world.

Who is the Creator? - “IS” pronounced as “Ease”.

How does he Create – ISIS – pronounced as “Easy”.

In another footnote we are told that the hebrew word for male is “ish” and the word for female is “isha”. Again, “Ease” and “Easy” if you assume a long ‘A’ pronunciation.

God creates through his perfect judgment which is symbolized by his wisdom as represented by Isis. “IS” is the Father and “ISIS” is the Mother.

When I discovered the coded material in the Gospel of Mark related to the name of Yeshua, which is in my article “Jesus or Yeshua, does it make a difference?”; the presence of the word, YHWH, appeared 4 times in coded form in Mark.

When decoded the 4 repetitions combine to form the name, “ISIS” and again, “ISIS”. This could function like a mantra, “Easy” ... “Easy”. Could this be a coincidence? The group that was responsible for the creation of the gospels of Mark

and John was, in my view, known by the name “Essenes”, though they referred to themselves as “The Way”.

It appears that the name “Essenes” was used to label quite a few people in the ancient middle east. The name was applied to those who were following an ascetic, peaceful lifestyle of learning, meditation and discipline. These people were identified as being devotees of “ISIS” (Easy), and were called “Essenes” or “Easyenes”, phonetically

The ancient cultures were much more verbally oriented and spelling was usually concerned with phonetics. In some material from that era, the name for Isis is shown to be “Essee” in the original Egyptian which conveys the correct pronunciation and brings to mind the spirit of the goddess and serves to reveal the true origin of the name, “Essenes”; that is, the devotees of “Essee”.

There is also another spelling of “Aset”, which when pronounced we have, assuming a long “A” and a silent “t”, once again “Easy”.

When Moses informed the Israelites that the God that they were to serve was named “ISIS” they knew immediately what their destiny would be. The laws that God had given to them through Moses, they were told, would enable them to become a holy nation of priests which is clearly the way of the followers of “ISIS” the goddess of wisdom and peace.

On the internet there is found an image of a reproduction of a statue depicting the goddess, “Isis” which purports to be an authentic reproduction of a statue from ancient Egypt.

There are divisions shown within the wings of the figure that have been painted in the correct colors and order of the 7 chakras. I can’t say that it was really an accurate rendition of the original statue, but the association of the chakras with the goddess of wisdom and peace would seem appropriate.

In my article “7 Chakras as Represented in the Gospel of Mark” you will find the chakras meditation that is found in the bible books of Genesis through Samuel.

The story of Moses is a part of this meditation.

In the story, Moses becomes enraged by the injustice he sees being visited on an Israelite and murders an Egyptian overseer. Moses becomes a fugitive and flees Egypt. Eventually, he is called into the wilderness to meet God.

Journeying into the wilderness to seek God was also a very common feature of the ancient world. The Hindu religion had a sect that focused on this practice which gave birth to Buddhism when the prince who became the Buddha found enlightenment in such solitude.

We find Jesus driven into the wilderness by the spirit in the Gospels.

Mohammed is said to have gone into the wilderness to find his calling.

Turning to the native Americans we find the “Spirit Quest” where young men are sent alone to seek their personal spirit guide in the wilderness.

authorHOUSE®

In the ancient Egyptian religion the goddess, “Essee” was one of several “Mother” goddesses. She is depicted as a young woman with the wings of a bird to symbolize the nurturing spirit that was often observed in mother birds.

Another “Mother” goddess in the Egyptian pantheon was known as “Hathor”.

She was depicted as a young woman with the horns and tail of a cow. In her case the mothering spirit found in cows was being represented.

“Hathor” was seen primarily as a protector of the young.

The story of Moses is structured to bring to mind the transition that is made from a mother’s role of protector, as symbolized by “Hathor” to the role of teacher which is symbolized by “Essee” as a child grows to maturity.

When Moses sees one of his people being abused he leaps into action to protect him just as a mother cow would have been observed to do when protecting her young. When Moses returns to lead his people out of Egypt he then is seen as assuming the mantle of teacher like “Essee”.

The transition from being the wards of the Egyptians to a mature, independent nation is being shown as well as the Hebrews strike out on their own. The Hebrews have grown up as a people. They find their calling, just as is intended by the journey into the wilderness enacted by Moses and then all of the people, and will become a holy nation of priests.

When seen from this point of view, the meaning of the verses found in Exodus concerning “YHWH” becomes clear.

The real nature of polytheism should, in my opinion, be understood as being very similar to the use of saints in Catholicism.

The so-called gods and goddesses represent ideals of behavior and personality. In the Egyptian religion prayers were offered to God that the spirit found in the epitome of a mother bird or mother cow would be bestowed on a human mother. The concept advanced by some present day scholars and experts regarding the anthropomorphic projection of human traits onto animals to explain the gods and goddesses is not really valid, to me.

The personality traits seen in the animal kingdom by the polytheists existed independently of human society. The mother bird or mother cow existed long before a human being first became aware of them.

Recently, a story was featured in news reports which told of a young boy who had become lost in the mountainous terrain of Utah. He had gone on a hike with his parents and had become separated from them. As he wandered around he began to despair. The weather had been quite mild during the day as the family hiked through the mountains, but as the night approached, the temperature fell very sharply.

Realizing that he would be overcome by exposure to the cold as he felt the temperature drop into the 20's F he finally simply laid down and gave up. He was clothed for the warm temperatures of the day which had been in the 60 to 70 F degree range. Instinctively, he knew that he was not going to survive to the morning.

As he lay on the ground resigning himself to his fate, he was suddenly aware that he was not alone. Out of the deep darkness he saw enormous shapes begin to approach him. He screamed and grabbed sticks and rocks and hurled them in the direction of the shapes. Two large adult elk calmly disregarded the missiles and his screams and positioned themselves beside him; one on either side.

They were so close he could feel their warmth. In near madness he stopped fighting and fell into a deep, exhausted sleep.

When he awoke the sun was shining and the temperature on the mountain was no longer threatening. The elk had come to his rescue in spite of his attempt to drive them away. As the temperature had warmed they had quietly left him as he no longer needed them.

If this episode had happened in ancient Egypt the two elk may have been given names and had statues erected in their honor. A cult might have been formed so that the story and their spirit could live on through the centuries. ☺

authorHOUSE



The goddess of the mother cow named, “Hathor”, most probably came to be recognized by some similar event.

The boy had undertaken a kind of an accidental “Spirit Quest”.

The elk had not been acting like humans. They had been acting out their calling as caregivers for the vulnerable young; their responsibility.

The mother bird spirit named, “Essee” would have been commemorating all the times that mother birds had been seen protecting and instructing their young charges.

When we substitute the word personality for god or goddess or spirit, then our disagreeable impulse against the polytheists can be avoided and the need to run from the truth of what our ancient ancestors really thought disappears.

The use of these images such as the gods and goddesses can be seen as the literary devices of their day. People could relate to them and remember them; which made them useful for instruction.

Matthew Ch. 23 v. 37

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!”

The internet has another alleged authentic image of Isis. In this portrayal she is shown with her responsibilities depicted

above her head. The baby chick for her role as a mother, then an owl with a scroll symbolizing her role as a teacher of wisdom, and finally a vulture recalling her role as a comfort at the time of death.

authorHOUSE®

Once, I accepted a position in a small town in Florida that required that I relocate to the new town. I rented a small mobile home in a mobile home park when I initially got there. On my first day in the mobile home a woman who lived next door to me came by to say hello. She was totally deaf and also could not speak.

Using her cell phone, she wrote out a few messages to me and then turned to return to her home. As she started to walk away I suddenly heard the most beautiful singing of a bird. Delighted, I turned to call my neighbor's attention to the singing before I remembered that she could not hear at all.

I quickly turned to see what kind of a bird had been singing, but there was no bird in sight.

Turning to walk back into my mobile home another neighbor appeared across the street and called to me that the bird that I had heard was the bird that they called "Mama" there in the park. The neighbor said that the singing had been "Mama"'s way of saying how sad it was that my other neighbor could not hear.

It was not long after this that I was in another small town in Florida about 50 miles away on business. I was walking through a residential area and a bird lighted on a tree nearby and seemed to call to me as though greeting me.

As I turned to watch her, a young boy came over to me and with a big grin told me that was their "Mama" bird just making me feel welcome.

It goes without saying that no one in these small Florida towns had ever been told anything about “Essee” or ancient Egyptian religion. But if they did ever have occasion to talk with an Egyptian about “Essee” they should have no problem relating to her as a gentle, caring personality or understanding the devotion that she engendered.

It’s also safe to say that rather than imagining animals as having human personalities, the stories now known as myths were more a way of preserving the memory of real encounters with animals that had greatly impressed people back in those ancient times and that the weird figures mixing human with animal features represent a hope that humans would incorporate some of the traits of these remarkable animals into their own behavior.

According to the adherents of the so-called “polytheistic” religions, it is a misconception to believe that they are worshipping many gods. They have only one God with a capital “G”. This is the same God as the monotheistic faiths, the Creator. The other gods, with a small “g” are creatures of the Creator, the same as human beings or other creatures.

What these gods or goddesses are being recognized for is their special strengths or abilities in comparison to human beings. The worship of these gods with a small “g” is more an admiration and expression of desire that a person might be gifted with a similar, albeit human-scale, ability or helpful spirit.

Similarly, the images, statues and stories are meant to serve as aids for bringing to mind a particular ability or strength of character.

Almighty God, is still the only source of this help.

Again, we see the same thing in the saints of Christianity and the famous people of Judaism or heroes of society in general. They provide examples of what should be aspired to and striven for and the kind of spirit or personality that is most desirable for people to find in others. And of course undesirable traits to avoid as well.

Before the name “Jesus” was created in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Lord’s name was, “Jesu” or “Iesu” which was a Greek sound-alike or transliteration for the Hebrew name of “Yeshua”. On the following page is a poem written before the change was made to the new name of “Jesus”.

In the distant past, before writing, it's not hard to envision the sound of "ease" gaining popularity among the human family. Many words are meant to convey not only a meaning but the actual spoken sound to provide a spirit or feeling.

"Is" as a word for God would produce a feeling of "ease".

The Hebrew scriptures tell us that God is merciful, forgiving, saving, etc., to those who are faithful to Him; words whose meanings are conveyed by the welcome sound of "ease" or "Is" as it came to be spelled

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from *The Temple* (1633), by George Herbert:

JESu is in my heart, his sacred name  
Is deeply carved there: but th'other week  
A great affliction broke the little frame,  
Ev'n all to pieces: which I went to seek:  
And first I found the corner, where was J,  
After, where ES, and next where U was graved,  
When I had got these parcels, instantly  
I sat me down to spell them, and perceived  
That to my broken heart he was *I ease you*,  
And to the whole is J E S U.

During the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC a great change took place in the middle east. Foremost, the Babylonian Empire was conquered by the Persians led by Cyrus the Great.

The babylonians had been hard rulers in the region, as depicted in the Hebrew Scriptures. They were worshipers of gods of warfare, violence and human sacrifice.

The persians on the other hand were Zoroastrians. They were worshipers of gods of peace and wisdom. Cyrus is recorded as having been a devoted follower of the chief Zoroastrian god known as Ahura-Mazda. In English, Ahura-Mazda has been translated as meaning “The Creator’s Wisdom”. As we have seen, this is also the character of Isis. The “Cyrus Cylinder” preserves the decree guaranteeing freedom of religion in the new Persian Empire and our American founding fathers were said to have been greatly influenced by this Persian innovation.

Clearly, the optimistic views we see written in the book of Isaiah are being fueled by this dramatic change in the political landscape of the region. Isaiah heralds a new era on the horizon where the lion lays down with lamb and peace reigns supreme.

This era in history is referred to as the Axial Age and has been compared to the European Renaissance.

Just as in the Renaissance, a return to what were seen as superior attitudes and ideas was central to the Axial Age. Following the centuries of the dark ages, a longing for the perceived more civilized stability of the Roman Empire had developed and, so too, in the ancient middle east the rule of



the Babylonians had generated a similar nostalgia for some of customs of the formerly despised Egyptian Empire.

Central to this yearning for the past was a belief that personal responsibility and self-control were all that was needed to make their world the way it should be.

This culture was alluded to in the story of Abraham in the Bible. In the earlier times, among the Bedouin herdsmen like Abraham, there was a code of conduct that allowed the herders to share the land in peace. Respect for others and their property was a paramount concern.

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When disputes arose, a council of elders was entrusted to mediate a peaceful resolution. Though the transition to living in cities had brought new challenges and problems – again, as depicted in the Bible – a return to the old values was seen as being the solution. Something tried and true.

With the ascent of the Persians came a promise of such values being reinstated.

The Hebrew Scriptures, the Hindu Scriptures, the Teachings of Buddhism and a renewed interest in the Egyptian goddess Isis were some of the products of this new birth of personal freedom for the people of the middle east.

In particular, the popularity of Isis was very widespread. She is found to be worshiped by name, but also in principal though by other names, throughout the ancient world.

The Romans were bemoaning this devotion to Isis, in their references to the Essenes, during the Gospel era. The Roman historians speak of Essene groups being found in every town in their empire. In so much as the Roman Empire was built on and sustained by military might, a natural inclination would be to expect the Romans to be pretty tolerant of the peace-loving Essenes. But the truth was that the Essenes were actually seen as a threat by the Romans because the roman practice was to recruit or impress local subjects into their armies. It was therefore not a good development to have subjects devoted to peace and non-violence.

According to the Jewish historian Josephus this tension played out very dramatically in the 1<sup>st</sup> century in the roman province of Judea, the setting for the Gospels. The

Essenes there were brutally persecuted by the local roman authorities. Our information is that the Jews were despised by the romans. The plan was to compel the Jews to rebel by being unjust and cruel towards them. Obviously, a group seeking to convince their fellows to “turn the other cheek” was not very helpful to the roman plan.

Josephus also recounts the pressure on the local roman authorities occasioned by their dishonest business dealings with the Jews. He writes that the romans were counting on a rebellion to create enough confusion and destruction for them to avoid being found out by their superiors in Rome.

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It so happens that the Roman historians who documented this era indirectly provide a confirmation of the authentic pronunciation of the name of the goddess Isis.

In 1924 a film based on the roman histories was produced in Italy. The film was “Messalina”. The film proved to be remarkable for several reasons. The sets, costumes, acting and dialogue are amazingly realistic. If the Italians couldn’t recreate the Roman Empire of the first century then I suppose no one could - but the authenticity is still impressive.

The acting is also of note because of the effort made to have the actors speak their lines precisely as written in the Title Cards – even though the film was a silent picture. In almost all the films of the silent era the actors very seldom spoke their lines as shown in the Title Cards. It was actually a commonly used technique to make it obvious to the audience that much more was being spoken than what they were reading on the Titles.

Whether the producers of “Messalina” were planning for a sound remake to be done in the future when audio could be added I can’t say. It would seem most likely that that was their intention. Very few silent films were ever converted to full sound films in the manner that this film was in 1935. One reason was that the dialogue would have been essentially impossible to synchronize with the actors lips since so much of what was spoken was never even documented.

The 1935 sound edition of “Messalina” had no such difficulty as noted previously. All of the lines in the sound version were synchronized perfectly with the original silent actors’

lips. As noted above, this was possible only because of the fore-thought that must have been used.

In the original roman histories the worship of Isis was associated with human sacrifice, no doubt to create as much negativity as possible surrounding such devotion to her. I really haven't seen any such mention of this kind of sacrifice to Isis anywhere else and I don't accept that it was happening despite what the romans wrote. But, the film, adhering faithfully to the historians depicts a sacrifice ritual.

But it also provides the authentic pronunciation of the goddess' name. In three different scenes the name of Isis is shown in the Title Cards while it is being spoken by the dialogue-dubbing actors of the sound version. Very clearly the name is pronounced "Easy" in all three of the scenes.

The historical period of 40-50 AD is the focus of the story of “Messalina” and as was mentioned the goddess Isis was much maligned by the Romans. The official roman historians wrote that the followers of Isis were performing human sacrifices. The essenes were described as being odd, unappealing characters as well.

They were said to congregate in outlying areas throughout the empire refusing to eat meat, abstaining from sex, living apart without females among them.

However, Josephus, the Jewish historian contradicts the official roman opinions and declares the essenes to have some groups, at least, with typical families and children living peacefully among the general populace.

If we advance in time about one hundred years we find that the goddess Isis is now well entrenched in roman society and completely accepted by the roman government. A stature of Isis from probably 120 to 150 AD shows her looking majestic with a headdress holding a snake on each side. And so we find another connection to the kundalini and the chakras.

From 148 AD we find a roman coin showing Isis, young and vibrant, standing astride a roman galley substituting for the mast and holding the wind-filled sail with her hands.

In 201 AD the roman government struck a coin with an image of Isis nursing her baby – Horus. The legend surrounding the image reads, “Saeculi Felicitas” which is translated as “Happy Time” in English.

In fact, eventually the Romans minted quite a number of coins depicting Isis.

It would seem the people of the roman empire could simply not be dissuaded from their love for this very positive spirit. The government had to relent and go along with the tide. Apparently, she had become as essential as the mast of a sailing ship, and as necessary as the lighthouse at Pharos in Egypt which was the destination she sailed to as well as another popular symbol of her importance. ☺

In reality, how could a devotion to the best aspects of motherhood fail to reach the hearts of most people? If enough people thought of themselves as the children of this perfect mother it could transform the entire world. A proof that the majority of the people of earth would rather live in peace as opposed to violent struggle.

Another very ancient positive spirit was referred to as “yah”. Around 1900 an elderly american man published a book called “A History of the Choctaw, Chickasaw and Natchez Indians”. This book was his recollections of his early life in the state of Alabama where he was a neighbor of native americans who were still living their traditional life-style. The Choctaw were the main topic since he was most familiar with their ways.

H.B. Cushman, the author, was most insistent throughout his work that he was relating the real story of the Choctaw. He found them to be of very high character and moral fiber in particular and was not at all hesitant to describe the religious practices of the Choctaw which fostered and supported their society. They weren’t perfect according to Mr. Cushman, but they definitely had admirable standards of behavior.

Cushman’s description of their use of the word “yah” was quite enlightening.

I began this article with references to the ancient Hebrew use of the word “yah” as a name for God. The Choctaw also used the word to address God in prayer. We know the Hebrew “alleluia” which is, in English, “praise Yah”. In the Choctaw story a ritual was recounted where the braves of the tribe built a great bonfire on the eve of a battle that was to be fought against the Chickasaw nation. The braves then formed a circle around the fire and danced around and around the fire shouting “yah, yah, yah” in unison. This was the way that they prayed for success in their upcoming fight. They sought “yah”’s blessing.



In 1933 a film titled, “Eskimo” was produced here in the United States. The plot of the film involved a native american Inuit tribe’s struggle to adapt to the European-american influences advancing into the tribe’s traditional homeland.

The main star of the film was a half-Inuit, half-European actor who portrayed the chief of the small tribe. He becomes involved in a dispute with a white man that results in a fight in which the white man is killed by the Inuit.

The Inuit becomes guilt-ridden and afraid of the consequences of his act. He retreats into the wilderness to seek out the spirits for guidance.

The seriousness of the act of “going to the spirits” is emphasized when one of the chief’s friends becomes alarmed at finding him out there alone calling out to the spirits.

The ritual involved wailing, screaming, shouting and crying as the chief confessed his sin and sought peace from the spirits. Finally, his cries attracted a bird who flew to him and began to call to him. The Inuit accepted the bird’s attentions as a sign from the Great Spirit that he had been forgiven and to celebrate his salvation he changed his name to symbolize his new beginning away from his former guilt and anxiety.

He also began to shout “yah, yah, yah” repeatedly with joy, relief and gratitude to the Creator.

The use then of “yah” can be recognized as a feature of a very ancient human society that existed before humans split up and spread around the earth. Again, we see an example of a variation on the “Spirit Quest” as well as the way Isis, the mother bird interacts with our human world.

Sadly, the film “Eskimo” was a failure at the box office and very few people actually saw it, apparently. One of the biggest reasons for the lack of interest was the sexually-oriented publicity campaign that was utilized, The film was advertised as a “shocking look at the sexual practices of the wild Inuit people”. There is some adult material in the film that is not in line with the average 1930’s film, but it was a common practice at that time to simply edit out material believed to be objectionable to a particular city or region of the country before exhibiting a film there. The way the film was advertised would have made it very difficult for a

Christian to go into a theater to view it at a time when most citizens professed to be Christian.

So why go to the expense, weather the dangerous conditions and persevere through great obstacles to produce an authentic film shot entirely on location at the arctic circle only to then guarantee that few people would want to go to see it?

The producers were not foolish enough to make a mistake like that.

The reasoning seems to relate to the strange approach taken to the Holy Scriptures that I referred to earlier. The sense that a responsibility to be honest with a given audience is being conflicted with a feeling of concern for the reaction of that audience to the truth that might be revealed to them.

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In his introduction to his book, Josephus, the first century Jewish historian, stated that his primary motivation in writing was to correct the falsehoods that he believed were being propagated by Roman historians.

In the gospels Jesus Christ teaches that the truth will set you free.

Also from the gospels we hear the Roman approach from the viewpoint of the Christians when Pontius Pilate asks the rhetorical question, “What is truth?”

Indeed, Jesus Ben Sira himself counsels us that only God knows the truth.

But that doesn’t mean we can’t know some things are true to the best of our judgement. Personally, cultivating good judgement is the key to me. We all must place our faith in something or someone.

The Wisdom of Yeshua Ben Simon

Chapter 39 v. 34

“So now sing praise with all your heart and voice, and bless the name of the Lord!”

Chapter 51 v. 29

“May your soul rejoice in his mercy, and may you not be put to shame when you praise him.”

Allelu Yah!

Amen.

A frequent criticism of my work has been focused on the great joy to be felt when a person makes a discovery on their own – especially, say, coming to understand a difficult bible passage. To have some verse make sense for the first time in a way that someone can relate to.

I realize that the bible is important to each individual in his or her own way. And I appreciate that the secrets that I have revealed may be seen as being intended for each individual to find on their own.

My own argument is that to lead people astray by providing them with false information or withholding facts from them intentionally is far worse for our society. An example that really struck home with me surfaced about 10 years ago.

Someone was posting a small statement in an internet chat room that “Jesus is the Devil”. They were supporting their revelation by referring to the Book of Revelations Chapter 22 v. 16 where Jesus refers to himself as the “bright morning star.”

In the book of Isaiah Chapter 14 v. 12-17 Isaiah refers to Lucifer as the “bright morning star”, the poster continues, therefore, Jesus is revealing that he is Lucifer who is the Devil.

Someone posted a reply explaining that Isaiah was using a common literary device of that era in which he wrote his book. At that time there were several myths or proverbs likening the planet Venus, which is often referred to as the “morning star” to a person who is unduly proud. The simile is of Venus taking credit for bringing the sun up at dawn since Venus precedes the sun with its own bright light even though the light of Venus is only a reflection of sunlight and once the sun makes a full appearance Venus disappears completely. This type of person was referred to sarcastically

as “Lucifer” in some of the myths; which means “bringer of the light (or dawn)” in English. This simile is echoed in “Satan’s fall from heaven” as punishment for challenging the authority of God.

Isaiah was criticizing a neighboring ruler who Isaiah saw as attempting to make himself unduly important.

Then the second poster reminds that the book of Job contains a reference to “morning stars” which are said to herald the coming of the kingdom of God in simile to the heralding of the dawn. This second use of “morning star” would be the obvious one that fits the role Jesus claimed for himself.

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Also, I think that even though some of the ideas that I have talked about were certainly meant to be understood only for a select group of readers at the time that they were written; it was a very long time ago and, as we have seen, circumstances do change over time. I have prayed a lot about this question and I have come to believe that it is good for a greater audience to be given the opportunity to learn in the manner of the earliest Christians who had the advantage of knowledgeable teachers to aid them and were not expected to figure these hidden meanings out on their own.

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Roman coin from circa 201 AD depicts Isis nursing her baby Horus.





From @ 120 to 150 AD we have a roman statue of Isis.



This roman coin was minted in 148 AD – Isis journeying to the Pharos lighthouse, which can to be used as a symbol for her.



Ancient Egyptian depiction of Isis with rainbow colors in the wings.



Ancient Egyptian image of Isis showing her responsibilities. She is a mother, shown by the image of a Chick; she is a teacher of wisdom, shown by the images of a Scroll and an Owl; and she is a comfort at the time of death, shown by the image of a Vulture.

## About the Author

The author was born in 1953 and raised in Northern Kentucky near the banks of the Ohio river. He spent his early childhood living adjacent to a large virgin hardwood forest. His days were often spent exploring and marveling at his mysterious neighbor so densely packed with life. Its magnificent oaks, maples, etc., engendered such reverence that his first playmates and he commonly referred to it as “our church.”

His manmade church, however, was the Roman Catholic faith. As a child he loved the mystery and beauty of the Latin mass. It was a real tragedy for him when the switch was made to all-English services. The changes made him question just what was really sacred.

He experienced everything that has come to symbolize the decade of the 1960's during his teenage years. It was then that he began a more inward search for spirituality, investigating various religions and philosophers. His first great literary love was, not surprisingly, the works of Thoreau. His *A Week on the Connecticut and Merrimack Rivers*, containing page after page of his descriptions of the virgin hardwood forest in New England, often simply overwhelmed him with warm familiarity.

The war, attitudes about our leaders, even styles in dress and music were so unsettling during this time. Not only did the Catholic Church change, but also his dear forest was cleared and altered beyond any recognition. What was really important became a central issue.

Perhaps that is why he was drawn to study the turbulent times that gave birth to Christianity and the gospels.

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